







THE STORY  
OF  
GOVERNMENT HOUSE









*Lord Wellesley, Governor General, 1800*  
From a painting by J. H. Thomas





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OF  
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*by*

N. V. H. Symons, M.C., I.C.S.

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## Preface

In Government House Library is an admirable work in two large volumes by Marquis Curzon of Kedleston called **BRITISH GOVERNMENT IN INDIA—THE STORY OF THE VICEROYS AND GOVERNMENT HOUSES** published in 1925 by Cassell and Company.

It is the result of indefatigable original researches made by Lord Curzon during his Viceroyalty (1899-1905) and also afterwards, partly out of love of the great office he held, and partly out of love for Government House, Calcutta, which was modelled on his ancestral home Kedleston Hall. He states that it was the similarity between the two houses that first turned his attention, when a boy, to India and planted in him the ambition, from an early age, to pass from a Kedleston in Derbyshire to a Kedleston in Bengal. His ambition was fulfilled and he repaid the debt by writing the history of the house and its inmates. When he died in 1925 he was still engaged in correcting the proofs and preparing the Index.



This small volume collects together in the form more or less of a guide book, condenses and in some cases adds to such information from the five hundred pages of Lord Curzon's work as is thought by one who is interested in his surroundings may appeal to others who are of like mind. Those whom it interests are recommended to read the intensely interesting full work by Lord Curzon.

N. V. H. SYMONS, .

*Private Secretary to His Excellency  
Sir John Anderson, P.C., G.C.B., G.C.I.E.,  
Governor of Bengal.*

GOVERNMENT HOUSE,

CALCUTTA :

*The 4th July, 1935.*

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## CHAPTER I

### Introductory

**T**HE design of Government House, Calcutta, is an adaptation of the plan of Kedleston Hall in Derbyshire which was built for Lord Scarsdale, the great-great-grandfather of Lord Curzon of Kedleston, in the years 1759-1770 by the renowned architect Robert Adam. Although the fame of Kedleston was on many lips in the second half of the 18th century on account of its decorative features and the beauty of its style, it was not this so much as the remarkable suitability of the general design to the conditions of a tropical climate which led to its adoption as the general model for Government House, Calcutta, which was built in the years 1799-1803.

The scheme of a great central pile with curving corridors radiating from its four angles to detached wings, each constituting a House in itself, was admirably adapted to a climate where every breath of air from whatever quarter must be seized.

Government House resembles Kedleston Hall in the broad external features of shape, design and orientation, in the extreme dimensions from East to West, in the concentration of the main State rooms in the middle pile, in the placing there of a great marble hall supported by columns and in the superimposition of a dome above the Southern façade, but the two houses differ radically both in material and arrangement. Kedleston is built mainly of a grey or yellowish sandstone and only partly of brick. while Government House is built entirely of brick covered over with white plaster which is colour-washed every year. They differ also in completeness of construction, only two of the projecting wings having been finished at Kedleston, whereas Government House has all four. Government House also has a semi-circular projecting portico and colonnade on the South front which Kedleston lacks. Another point of dissimilarity is that the curved corridors at Government House are two storeys high and so their roof line is level with that of the wings and of the main building, whereas at Kedleston the corridors are only one storey high so that the wings stand up higher than the

curving corridors which join them to the central pile. Government House in addition has spacious verandahs on the Southern face which are absent and unnecessary at Kedleston.

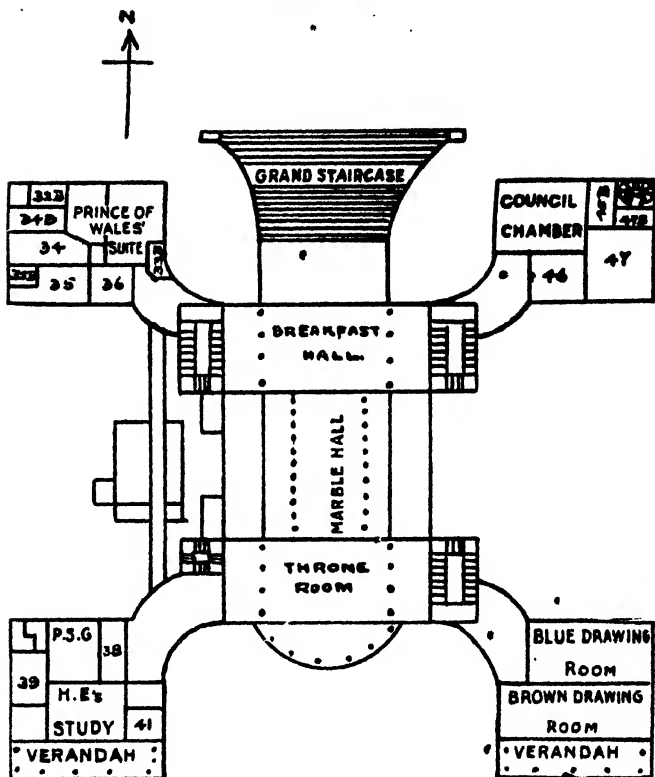
In the interior, Government House differs from Kedleston in that above the Marble Hall at Government House there is a Ball Room, whereas at Kedleston the Marble Hall is carried right up to the roof and is lit by skylights. Also there is a grand central internal staircase at Kedleston whereas at Government House there are four comparatively small staircases at the four angles of the central pile which are very much better suited for the arrangements which have to be made for the coming and going of public entree and private entree guests at large functions.



# GOVERNMENT HOUSE, CALCUTTA.

## FIRST FLOOR.

Scale 100' = 1"



## CHAPTER II

### The Interior

THOSE living or staying in Government House are mostly concerned with the first floor. As on the other two floors, the shape of the rooms in the central block is roughly that of a capital I, the upright being the pillared Marble Hall and the two horizontal bars being the Breakfast or Small Dining Room on the North and the Throne Room on the South. The curved corridors to the wings lead out from the ends of these two rooms.

The Plan opposite will make the arrangement of the floor clear.

In the **North-West wing** is the Prince of Wales' Suite so called since it was used by His Royal Highness Prince Edward of Wales when he visited Calcutta in December, 1921.

In the **North-East wing** is the Council Chamber where the Governor-General used to preside over the Executive, and also, later, the

Legislative Council, now only used when the Governor presides over meetings too large to be held in his Study and for private cinema shows; a small drawing room which is used after lunch and small dinner parties; and a billiard room.

In the **South-East wing** are the Blue and Brown Drawing Rooms used after large dinner parties and for the reception by the Governor of notabilities on their arrival. When the Prince of Wales (afterwards King Edward VII) visited Calcutta in 1876 this wing was converted into a suite for him.

In the **South-West wing** is the Governor's Study surrounded by rooms for his Personal Staff.

On the **North-West staircase** there are a few oil paintings of Lieutenant-Governors, viz., from the bottom upwards Sir Cecil Beadon, K.C.S.I., Lieutenant-Governor 1862-1867; J. A. Bourdillon, C.S.I., I.C.S., acting Lieutenant-Governor 1902-1903; Sir John Peter Grant, G.C.M.G., Lieutenant-Governor 1859-1862 and Sir Charles Alfred Elliott, Lieutenant-Governor 1890-1895.

When the Viceroy left Bengal most of the pictures in Government House were taken away. There were, at the time, seventeen Government House pictures being renovated in England and the Government of Bengal decided to have reproductions made of eleven of them, viz., Marquis Wellesley, Marquis of Hastings, Earl Amherst, Lord Hardinge, Viscount Canning, Earl of Elgin, Lord Lawrence, Earl of Mayo and Marquis of Lansdowne, who had all lived in Government House as Governors General; the Duke of Wellington on account of his profound influence on the events of his time in India; and, for no recorded reason, Jung Bahadur of Nepal. The copying was done by W. J. Morgan and each of the six full length pictures (The Duke of Wellington and Lords Wellesley, Hastings, Amherst, Canning and Mayo) cost Rs. 2,500, while each of the five half length pictures (Jung Bahadur, and Lords Hardinge, Elgin, Lawrence and Lansdowne) cost Rs. 1,750, the total cost being Rs. 23,750 for the eleven.

A suggestion was recorded that copies should also be made of the pictures of all the other Governors General who had occupied Government House, but the matter was lost sight of.

The selection, therefore, of the pictures of former Governors General for Government House was determined by pure chance and they were not chosen for any reason other than that they happened to be in England and available for copying at a particular moment. The copies Morgan made were done either from originals or from copies of originals which had been made by G. F. Clarke. Clarke had been commissioned by the India Office in the time of Lord Northbrook (1872-1876) to make copies of missing pictures of Governors General from originals in England so that there might be a complete series in Government House. Lord Dalhousie (1848-1856) had first set the ball rolling and induced the Court of Directors to consent to send out missing pictures of Governors General.

In the **Breakfast Room** are full length oil paintings of King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra. These are copies of the originals by Sir Luke Fildes and were sent out by the India Office.

Opposite the painting of King Edward VII is a full length painting of Earl Amherst, Governor General 1823-1828. It shows him in

his Peer's Robes with knee-breeches and buckled shoes. The original picture was painted by Sir Thomas Lawrence, the picture which hangs in Government House to-day being a copy made by W. J. Morgan, R.B.A., in 1913, of a copy made by G. F. Clarke.

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Lord Amherst was a great stickler for ceremonial and never moved from one room of Government House to another without a long train of mace-bearers preceding him: when riding on the Maidan with his wife it was a rule that she might never advance beyond his horse's quarters, but he entertained little and so was not liked much by the European community and as a Governor General he was not very distinguished and was very nearly recalled.

It was he who obtained sanction for the formation of a Band for the Governor General; regimental bands having, before then, been borrowed as occasion required.

It was in his time that the First Burmese War was fought which, among other things, resulted in the acquisition of Assam. During this war there was a mutiny of three native regiments at

Barrackpore owing to their repugnance to cross the seas and go to fight in Burma. Lord and Lady Amherst at the time were almost alone in Government House, Barrackpore, and would undoubtedly have been captured and held as hostages by the mutineers had they known how unprotected they were. The mutiny was quelled by artillery brought from Dum-Dum and by English troops, the fight raging within a few hundred yards of Government House, some of the household servants being wounded by bullets. His eldest son, who was on his Staff, died of fever at Barrackpore at the age of 24 and is buried in the Station Cemetery.

Opposite the painting of Queen Alexandra is a full length portrait of Lord Amherst's predecessor, the Marquis of Hastings, Governor General 1813-1823, which is also a copy made by Morgan in 1913 of a copy made by John Hayes in Lord Canning's time (1857-1862) of the original painting by Samuel Lane in the Oriental Club, London. He is wearing a scarlet coat with black facings and cuffs slashed with gold—the same uniform that Lord Wellesley wears in his picture in the Brown Drawing Room,—white

knee-breeches and the Star and Ribbon of the Garter while round his neck is the badge of the Order of the Bath.

Lord Hastings was a close personal friend of the Prince Regent on account of whose insistence he was made Governor General, the first Lord Minto being recalled to make room for him. He had held Cabinet rank in 1806 and insisted on being made Commander-in-Chief as well as Governor General. His period of office is one of the most important in the history of British Rule for he rounded off the policy of Warren Hastings and Wellesley and by his campaigns against Nepal, the Mahrattas, and the Pindari freebooters, carried the spread of British Dominion over Northern and Central India to a stage which it was only left for Lord Dalhousie, a quarter of a century later, to complete. Simultaneously he resumed Wellesley's policy by extending British supremacy and protection over every available Native State. He unquestionably stands out as one of the foremost architects of the India we know to-day. It was he also, who by negotiating the purchase of Singapore, now of such vital strategic Naval importance to the



Empire, repaired the blunder of returning Java to the Dutch after it had been captured. In addition to these larger achievements he interested himself in the improvement and beautification of Calcutta, among other things building the Strand Road along the river bank with the proceeds of a great lottery.

His services to Calcutta are commemorated by the naming after him of more streets and so forth, than bear the name of any other Governor General. He was Baron Rawdon, Baron Hungerford and the Earl of Moira when he assumed office and his wife was the Countess of Loudoun in her own right. There are in Calcutta streets called Rawdon Street, Hungerford Street, Moira Street and Loudon Street in memory of him. Hastings Street had been named after Warren Hastings, but the colony of Hastings at the end of the Strand Road is named after Marquis Hastings (he received this title in 1818) as also is the Hastings Bridge over Tolly's Nullah which was erected by public subscription in his honour.

It may be mentioned, in passing, that the 165 feet high Ochterlony Monument on the

Maidan is in honour of General Sir David Ochterlony who conducted the campaign against Nepal which ended victoriously in 1816 during the time of Hastings, and resulted in the acquisition of those parts of the Himalayas on which stand Naini Tal, Mussoorie and Simla.

Lord Hastings also left his mark on his more immediate surroundings. He imported fine sparkling gravel from Bayswater to lay on the paths of Government House and he enlarged and completed Government House, Barrackpore, leaving it as it stands to-day more than double the size that it was when he arrived.

The white marble basin and fountain in front of the southern face of the Barrackpore house was put there by him. It probably once belonged to the Great Moghul at Agra but Lord Hastings found it among a lot of lumber in the artillery yard at Agra in 1815 and sent it down to Calcutta.

He inaugurated an era of great formality and magnificence of ceremonial and entertaining at Government House, insisting on all the appurtenances of Royal State and finally died so poor, owing to his lavish expenditure, that his entire

property had to be sold to pay his debts. After leaving India the state of his finances compelled him to accept the Governorship of Malta in 1824 and he died at sea in the Mediterranean in 1826. He was devoted to his family and when dying made the pathetic request that his right hand should be cut off and clasped in that of his wife when she should follow him. This was done.

On the **North-East staircase** are portraits of Sir Stanley Jackson, Governor 1927-1932, painted by B. L. Mukherji in 1930; the Earl of Lytton, Governor 1922-1927 (who, according to Lord Curzon, was born in Government House during the Viceroyalty of his father [1876-1880]; actually, he was born at Simla on 9th August, 1876, but the first four years of his life were divided between Government House, Barrackpore and Simla), painted by Jacomb Hood in 1926; Lady Elliott, wife of the Lieutenant-Governor whose picture is on the North-Western staircase; Luchmee Dass Seth of Muttra (a picture presented by himself in 1894); and Sheik Karim Baksh, Bara Khansamah 1848-1877. This striking picture was painted by a lady who was staying in Government House.

**The Marble Hall** consists of a central nave separated by pillars from side aisles on the model of a Roman atrium and has always been the State Dining Room, accommodating for this purpose about 100 persons but the table is usually prolonged into the Breakfast Room by which means another dozen guests can be accommodated. It is also used on the occasion of the arrival of a new Governor, the leading Provincial notabilities being ranged round it in chairs for the purpose of being introduced to the new Governor and of bidding farewell to the old. Persons of lesser consequence take their stand on the exterior Grand Staircase. During the period when Government House was the residence of Governors General and Viceroys, the Marble Hall was occasionally used when loyal or congratulatory addresses were presented and sometimes for sittings of the Governor General's Legislative Council when its proceedings were such as to attract a large gathering. Perhaps the most famous of such occasions was that when the Ilbert Bill which convulsed the European population of India during the Viceroyalty of Lord Ripon was discussed in January, 1884. Like the other State Rooms on this floor, it is

paved with grey marble and lit with lustre chandeliers. The coffered ceiling is gilded and painted white. When the house was first built the pillars were covered with the exquisite chunam, or plaster, said to have been made of burnt shells, for which India has long been famous, and which when polished took a surface like burnished ivory. In the passage of time the chunam decayed and the pillars were white-washed, and in 1869 Lord Mayo on coming out as Viceroy found that they had actually been painted black. He got chunam workers up from Madras, which was then the home of the art, and renovated the whole of the pillars on this and the upper floor. At the same time the handsome teak doors throughout the building which had apparently been covered over with white paint since the beginning, of which they were found to be encrusted with innumerable layers, were scraped clean and polished and gilded as they have been ever since.

Lord Curzon in 1899 found that the chunam had perished, that big pieces had been chipped out and filled in with ordinary plaster, that the

surface had been defaced by constant rubbing and by many scratches and bruises and that the pillars would not stand the test of more than a cursory inspection. But he found that the art of chunam had so entirely decayed that only in Madras and Jaipur could any workmen be found who still practised it. He sent for small parties of the best artificers from both places and set one party to work upon one set of pillars and the other upon another, watching their labours as they proceeded and intending to give the order to the winner of the competition. The result however was so thoroughly unsatisfactory, the new surface in both cases being gritty, dirty and destitute of the wonderful high polish of the old work, and withal so costly, the estimate for the pillars on the two floors being Rs. 30,000 (£2,000 in those days) that he did not feel justified in pursuing the experiment and ordered the pillars to be enamelled. With the passage of time and the accumulation of dirt the result proved disappointing. Another coat of chunam was applied to the pillars in 1920 but it was not comparable to the old cement and the pillars are now once more enamelled in ivory colour.

When the Marble Hall was first built the ceiling as well as that of the Ball Room above was painted on canvas by a local artist named Creuse whose bill for the decorations of Government House amounted to, sicca rupees 69,000 or £8,625 (a sicca rupee was worth 2s. 6d. and was a coin of standard weight and fineness struck by the East India Company to facilitate accounts, there being several kinds of rupees of varying values in existence. The word sicca meant a die.)

The white ants, however, destroyed the canvas in a few years but it was renewed until Sir John Lawrence in 1865 substituted the present ceiling for it. The present designs in white and gold are believed to be the work of H. M. Locke, formerly principal of the Calcutta School of Art.

Along the East and West walls of the aisles of the Marble Hall are ranged the more than life-size marble busts of the Twelve Cæsars, replicas of a series not infrequently met with in the adornment of palaces and princely mansions during the classical revival of the 18th century. A similar series exists in the basement hall at

Kedleston, and Lord Curzon came to the conclusion that the architect of Government House in taking Kedleston as his model thought fit to reproduce the Twelve Cæsars also. He dismissed the various legends attached to them, such as that they were seized from a Dutch ship which was taking them for the adornment of the Dutch Government House in Java or that they were seized from a French ship which was taking them as a present from the French King to the Nizam of Hyderabad or from Napoleon to Tippu Sultan. Lord Curzon describes them as still reposing in his time upon the most hideous painted wooden pedestals, out of all proportion to the size of the busts. He procured examples of the best Indian marbles and had a new set of pedestals fashioned from the handsomest of them to what he describes as a superior scale and design.

There are spacious verandahs on each side of the Marble Hall which Lord Curzon says were not part of the original building but were added afterwards. He gives no authority for this statement and not only does their general structure not suggest that they are additions,



but they are shown as existing in very early prints of Government House. The West one is used as a service pantry and in the East one the band plays. The South portion of the East verandah is screened off, and Lord Curzon says he found it a very cool and convenient lounge for coffee and cigarettes after lunch.

Leading from the South end of the Marble Hall is the **Throne Room** which can be entirely screened off from it by long curtains. Up to the middle of the 19th century the Throne was placed, and Levees were held, in the Ball Room on the second storey and the present Throne Room was used for different purposes by different Governors General. Lord Wellesley, the builder of the house, used it once, for instance, for the Prize Giving of the students of the College of Fort William and when Lord Dalhousie came out as Governor General in 1848 he found that it was used as a dining room for small parties but as the Drawing Room was then, as it is now, in the South-East wing which meant that he had to walk through the Dining Room so as to get from his rooms in the South-West wing to the Drawing Room he turned the present Throne Room into a

Drawing Room with red damask furniture, the Drawing Room in the South-East wing being turned into a sitting room for Lady Dalhousie. It is interesting to note that this cost Rs. 34,800. In the time of Lord Canning (1856-1862) who succeeded Lord Dalhousie it was still used as a Drawing Room, but Lady Canning disliked it because people always had to be passing through it on their way between the South-West wing and the rest of the house.

It was however not converted into the Throne Room till after her time either by Lord Elgin (1862-1863) or Sir John (afterwards Lord) Lawrence (1864-1869), most probably the latter as it will be remembered that it was he who re-ceilinged this floor and so is known to have taken an interest in the house.

In Lord Curzon's time (1899-1905) it was used, as it is used now, primarily as the Throne Room where Princes were received, Addresses were presented, Levees and Drawing Rooms were held and where guests assembled in order to be presented before large banquets. He also used it for Durbars, which are now held under a shamiana, a hundred feet square erected in the

grounds, and surprisingly he reverted to the practice previously found so inconvenient of using it as the Dining Room on all occasions when the party was not more than fifty in number. King George V held a Levee, an Investiture and a Court in this room in 1911, and the Prince of Wales a Levee in 1921.

When Lord Curzon arrived he found, and removed, one incongruity from this room—a billiard table at the West end which he sent to Barrackpore. He also found the room carpeted, but discovering that there was the same beautiful polished marble flooring underneath as there was in the Marble Hall he removed the carpet and the floor remained bare during his time.

At the West end of the Throne Room is a red lacquer taktaposh—or ceremonial seat—which belonged to Theebaw the last King of Burma, and was taken from the Palace at Mandalay in the Third Burmese War of 1885. Legs have been added so as to turn it into a table. In its original state it would have only been a few inches from the floor.

The walls of the Throne Room were for the first time hung with silk by Lord Lytton (1876-1880) who imported a blue damask from Paris

for the purpose; they were rehung by Lord Lansdowne (1888-1894) with green silk and by Lord Curzon with rose silk and were again rehung in 1918 when Lord Ronaldshay was Governor of Bengal and in 1928 when Sir Stanley Jackson was Governor.

Under the Throne canopy is a four-legged sofa with silver lion arms which was brought from Belvedere and is said to have belonged to Warren Hastings (1772-1785).

The semi-circular verandah behind the Throne was originally paved with Chunar stone, but Lord Ripon (1880-1884) changed this for marble. Lord Curzon used to dine on this verandah occasionally on hot nights in March and in Lord Wellesley's time (long before there were any trees round Government House) his guests used to assemble there to see the fireworks on the Esplanade.

In the Throne Room there is a small, rather low, gilded seat of oriental pattern, with cushions of crimson velvet and a small footstool of similar design. This, on ordinary occasions, stood under the canopy and the Viceroy often used it on

formal occasions instead of one of the Silver State Chairs. It was supposed to have been the Throne of Tippu Sultan and to have been brought by Lord Wellesley to Calcutta after the Mysore Campaign. But Lord Curzon knew the tradition that Tippu's Throne was adorned or supported by great gold tigers' heads (Tippu was known as Tiger of Mysore), and he had seen in the Royal collection at Windsor one of these tigers' heads together with other emblems said to belong to it. He also noticed that the chair in the Throne Room contained large brass rings fixed to the base which showed that it had once been strapped or attached to something else. His researches into old records proved conclusively that it is not Tippu's State Throne. Lord Wellesley himself, when on 20th January, 1800, he wrote to the Court of Directors of the Honourable East India Company describing the objects captured at Seringapatam which he was sending home to the King, said "The golden tiger's head (which formed the footstool of Tippu Sultan's throne) I hope will be placed in St. George's Hall in Windsor Castle, as a noble trophy of the triumph of the British Arms in the East. It would have given me

pleasure to have been able to send the whole throne entire to England, but the indiscreet zeal of the prize agents of the army had broken that proud monument of the Sultaun's arrogance into fragments before I had been apprized even of the existence of any such trophy."

There was an editorial note to this despatch saying that the tiger's head and the bird of royalty which stood on the top of Tippu's throne were then (1846) preserved at Windsor and were frequently placed on the Royal table on occasions of State during the reign of William IV.

In the illustration of the King's gold plate, brought from Windsor to Buckingham Palace for display on the occasion of the State Banquet in connection with the Silver Jubilee celebrations in 1935, the gold tiger's head is very prominent. It is mounted on what appears to be an ebony plinth with a gold plate on which is a long inscription.

In 1840, Lord Wellesley when he was 80 years of age, wrote a full description of the throne as follows:—"The Throne of the Sultan of Mysore was of an octangular form, the canopy

being in the form of an umbrella; it was surmounted by a representation of the Uma (or species of eagle) which is now deposited in Windsor Castle; the figure of the bird is composed of pure plates of gold closely inlaid with precious stones with a collar of pearl, and pearls at the eyes and suspended from the beak, and the tail spread and ornamented with pearl and precious stones; the edges of the canopy were fringed with the richest pearl; it was supported by eight pillars, the capitals of which were in the form of the head of a royal tiger, enriched with precious stones; the whole was covered with plates of pure gold; the octangular pavilion rested on the back of a royal tiger couchant; this figure also was covered with plates of pure gold; and the eyes, tusks, and claws were of rock crystal; the head and paws of the figure are in Windsor Castle; the head is covered with inscriptions in the Persian character."

There is an illustration of the original Throne in the Victoria Memorial Hall collection in Calcutta and it is clear that the seat in Government House, though it may have belonged to Tippu Sultan, was not his Throne. Lord Curzon

concluded that it must have been a seat used by Tippu on elephant back on other occasions or that it was made to be lifted on staves.

The saddest ceremony the Throne Room can ever have witnessed was when on the 18th February, 1872, the body of Lord Mayo, who had been stabbed to death by a Pathan convict at Port Blair in the Andaman Islands, was brought to Calcutta and for two days lay in State in the Throne Room while crowds passed before it. The coffin was then carried down the Marble Hall to the Grand Staircase where an impressive funeral service was performed by the Bishop of Calcutta before a vast crowd after which it was conveyed to Ireland in a Man-of-War for interment. There is an oil painting showing the lying-in-state at the foot of the South-East staircase.

The only pictures now in the Throne Room are full length State Portraits of the reigning Monarch and his Consort which hang on either side of the Throne.

This completes the detailed survey of the main central block on the first floor. Brief



mention has been made of the rooms in the four wings and before proceeding to the other floors it would be convenient to dispose in detail of such of these as possess points of particular interest.

Historically the most important and interesting, next to the private study in the South-West wing, is the **Council Chamber** in the North-East wing.

For more than a century the Executive Council of the Governor General met here, the room being designed for the purpose and if the walls could speak they would indeed have a tale to tell. What is now used as a Drawing Room used to be a waiting room where the Secretaries to Government sat till they were summoned into the Council Chamber.

The Council Chamber was quite adequate for meetings of the Executive Council at which there were never more than ten persons in the room at the same time, but it was barely large enough for the Governor General's Legislative Council (brought into existence in 1861 after the Crown had assumed the Government of India) consisting

of twenty members, and for reporters and public as well. The reporters and the public were accommodated on chairs at the North end of the Chamber or wherever space could be found, but there was no room for more than a sprinkling and whenever a large gathering was expected the Council met in the Throne Room or the Marble Hall. Conditions were greatly aggravated when by the Indian Councils Act of 1909 (commonly known as the Morley-Minto Reforms) the Governor General's Legislative Council was increased in numbers to over sixty and as a partial solution a gallery for reporters was constructed at the North end of the Chamber.

Apart from this gallery the Council Chamber has changed less than any other room in Government House since 1803, and Lord Curzon says that except for ordinary repairs and furnishings he could not find that any money had been spent upon it.

It was in this Chamber that the incoming Viceroy was sworn in, but it is no longer used for swearing-in: the incoming Governor now takes the oath in the Throne Room.

On the occasion of meetings of the Executive or the Legislative Council the members assembled in the curved corridor before the arrival of the Governor General, who, after shaking hands with each, entered the Chamber and took his seat at the South end at the head of the table. In those days the famous picture of Warren Hastings, a copy of which now hangs on the South-East staircase, always hung on the South wall behind the Viceroy. There were also oil paintings of several other Governors General but these, or copies of them have all been removed to the South-East staircase and the Drawing Rooms in the South-East wing or to Delhi and the walls of the Council Chamber to-day are entirely bare.

In the curved corridor there is a collection of old prints of Government House and there are more in the small Drawing Room in this wing. On the walls of the Drawing Room are displayed some pieces of old Worcester china with the arms of the East India Company on them. These were rescued from obscurity by Lord Elgin (1894-1899) fortunately before what are the last remnants of a magnificent dinner service no doubt in daily use in Government House many years

ago had disappeared entirely. He hung them on the walls of what is now the Brown Drawing Room from where they were transferred to the glass-fronted cupboards in the South-West corridor. They could not be seen very well there so Sir John Anderson had some of the pieces hung in the small Drawing Room.

The arrangement of the rooms on both floors of the **North-West wing** dates from Lord Curzon's time and these rooms are the principal guest chambers. When he was Viceroy he found them so badly arranged with an immense amount of space sacrificed to one or two rooms of unnecessary size while the remainder was divided up with wooden partitions into old fashioned bathrooms and sweepers' staircases that he drew plans for the reconstruction of the two floors which added considerably both to the accommodation and to convenience. The suite on the first floor has been known as the **Prince of Wales' Suite** since it was occupied by Edward Prince of Wales, in 1921.

The **South-West wing** of the house was for over a century devoted to the official and domestic use of the Governor General and the

Governors of Bengal have used it in the same manner. Occasionally, however, it was surrendered to illustrious visitors as it was to George V and Queen Mary when they stayed in Government House as Prince and Princess of Wales in 1905-1906 and again as King and Queen in 1911. The large room looking on to the garden has always been the study of Governors General and Governors except for a short time when Lord Mayo (1869-1872) changed rooms with his Private Secretary, as he preferred to work in the smaller but cooler apartment adjoining which has a Northerly outlook.

Lord Ripon (1880-1884) had an iron spiral staircase made so that he could slip out unobserved from the verandah of the Study to the garden. This was blocked up in Sir Stanley Jackson's time (1927-1932) and was removed entirely in 1932.

In the words of Lord Curzon this room has probably witnessed discussions as agitated and decisions as heavily charged with fate as any private apartment in the wide circumference of the British Empire. Here Wellesley must have

dictated many a haughty reply to the exasperating censures of the Directors in London; here Lord William Bentinck threshed out with Macaulay the new scheme of Western Education which has revolutionised India and has had more momentous consequences than any decision of Indian policy during the past century; here Lord Auckland bent his head over the agonizing news from Kabul (vide page 74); here Lord Dalhousie penned those masterly minutes which have been the model and the despair of his successors; here Canning sat, surrounded by piles of boxes which he was too unbusinesslike to open, declining to believe in the Mutiny until the storm was upon him or to disband his own bodyguard though the danger was at his gates, but inflexible in his policy of mercy, while almost within hearing excited crowds of his fellow countrymen in the Town Hall were clamouring for his recall; here John Lawrence worked in a costume as untidy as when he was a Deputy Commissioner on the frontier; here Lord Dufferin turned his polished phrases; and here Lords Lansdowne and Roberts planned the strategy of another Afghan Campaign.

As to the amount of hard work done in this room, Lord Curzon makes the interesting statement that though he was seldom in his chair before 10 a.m., once there he rarely left it, with the exception of an hour or two for meals, or a public function or a private drive, until 2 a.m. the following morning, or sometimes later.

In the Viceroys' days the room to the North of the Study was occupied by the Private Secretary, the Assistant Private Secretary and a typist and it was only in the time of Lord Lytton (1876-1880) that his Private Secretary (Sir George Colley who was afterwards killed at Majuba) had the wooden partition erected to give the Private Secretary more privacy.

The room for the A.D.C.-in-waiting and visitors was the room to the East of the Study. When the Governor of Bengal entered into occupation of Government House in 1912, the Assistant Private Secretary's room was used for the A.D.C.-in-waiting and the old A.D.C.'s room for the stenographer-typist.

The curved corridor leading to this wing seldom sees people who are not on business bound,

but occasionally when a sit down supper is not provided at the Government House Hall it is transformed into a private buffet for the Governor and guests of high rank and for a few hours its sterner associations are forgotten.

The upper floor of the South-West wing used to contain merely bedrooms for the Viceroy and his family, but Lord Curzon turned one of them into a sitting room for Lady Curzon to save her what he calls the "ten league march" to the South-East wing and this sitting room was occupied by Queen Mary in 1911 as it had been in 1905-1906 when as Princess of Wales she stayed in Government House.

It was Lord Curzon also who had the electric lift installed in this wing for which all subsequent occupants must be grateful to him, and it was in his time that electric lights and fans were introduced into Government House. He gives some interesting facts about the progressive modernization of the interior of the house—in 1863, gas was laid on; in 1872, electric bells were installed; in 1882, a hot and cold water system was put in; in 1899, electric lights; in 1900,



electric fans (though Lord Curzon left the hand-pulled punkhas in the Marble Hall and the Reception Rooms preferring their measured sweep to what he called the hideous anachronism of the revolving blades); and in 1905, modern fixed baths replaced the queer-shaped old green-painted wooden tubs which however, are still in use at Barrackpore and in the European servants' quarters on the ground floor of the South-West wing.

The raised covered pathway on the first floor level on the West side of the house, enabling guests to get from the Prince of Wales' Suite to the lift without going through the rooms in the main block, was constructed in 1923 for the convenience of Lady Reading when she was staying in Government House as the guest of Lord Lytton.

The **South-East wing** has always contained guest rooms on the second floor and drawing rooms on the first floor except when this floor of the wing was converted into a suite for Edward, Prince of Wales, when he stayed in Government House in 1876. His visit evolved a passionate outburst of loyalty never before known in the

annals of British India, the feudatory chiefs and ruling houses feeling for the first time that they were incorporated in the Empire of an ancient and splendid dynasty.

The arrangement of the rooms has, however, undergone many changes and at present is very different from what it was even in Lord Curzon's time. He talks of the central room of the suite being known for many years as the Pink Drawing Room, owing to the colour of the wash upon the walls, and mentions that the ceilings were simply distempered in white. He says that he made considerable alterations, sweeping away the nest of little rooms which had been constructed when the floor had been used for sleeping purposes and providing out of the available space with little structural alteration a billiard room, an ante-room and a room in which the Band could play after dinner while leaving the main Drawing Room in the centre untouched.

Now-a-days there are merely two rooms, a large Drawing Room at the end of the curved corridor, stretching across the whole width of the wing, called the Green Drawing Room in Lord Lytton's time (1852-1857), but now called the Brown

Drawing Room and a smaller one to the North of it called the Blue Drawing Room. The Band plays in the wide verandah to the South of the Brown Drawing Room. It is probable that the billiard and ante-rooms which he made were in what is now the Blue Drawing Room.

The Governor receives distinguished visitors in the Blue Drawing Room and it is also used, together with the Brown Drawing Room, for the entertainment of guests after large parties, the Governor sitting in the Brown Drawing Room. The cheval glass in a lacquer frame which is in this corridor was taken from King Theebaw's Palace in the Third Burmese War and the prism chandelier is the only one remaining of the original chandeliers bought by Lord Wellesley at the sale of General Claude Martin's effects. There is a pair to the cheval glass in the same wing on the second floor.

The ceiling of the Brown Drawing Room is panelled and raftered in teak and on the walls there are only two pictures, one of Sir Arthur Wellesley (afterwards the Duke of Wellington) which is a copy made in 1913 by W. J. Morgan of the original by Robert Home in 1804 and the

other of his elder brother, Marquis Wellesley, the builder of Government House, also a copy by W. J. Morgan of an original by Home. The Duke of Wellington is dressed in a scarlet military coat and white breeches and wears the Star of the Order of the Bath on his breast. His brother, Lord Wellesley, is dressed in a scarlet coat with black cuffs and facings slashed with gold and wears the Ribbon and Star of St. Patrick. Below this is a jewelled star in the centre of which is a crescent and star. This is the star which was presented to him by the Court of Directors. It was made from some of Tippu Sultan's jewels and was given to him in recognition of his selflessness in declining to take his £100,000 share of the prize money which was distributed among the army after the fall of Seringapatam in 1799.

There are two pictures in the Blue Drawing Room\* one of Marquis Wellesley which is a fanciful copy of the picture in the Brown Drawing Room. The background is much the same but the pose and the dress are different. It was bought by Lord Lytton, Governor of Bengal, for £200 from Francis Edward of Marylebone.

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\*See Appendix.

The other picture is that of the Taj Mahal at Agra by Hodges.

There are several paintings on the walls of the **South-East staircase.**

At the top is a Morgan copy of a picture by F. Holl, R.A., of Lord Lansdowne, Viceroy, 1888-1894, in academic robes whose Viceroyalty was marked, among many other things, by the measures taken in conjunction with Lord Roberts, the Commander-in-Chief, to strengthen the defences of the North-West Frontier in the course of which the Durand Line was drawn, placing Chitral within the sphere of British influence and by the organisation of Imperial Service Troops in the Native States. Tremendous strides were made in the development of Burma during his period of office; the whole of which had come under British rule a few years before, after the Third Burmese War of 1885.

Before coming to India he had been Under-Secretary of State for War from 1872 to 1874, and for India in 1880, and Governor General of Canada from 1883-1885. After leaving India

he was Secretary of State for War from 1895-1900 and for Foreign Affairs from 1900-1905. He was also in the War Cabinet without portfolio in 1915-1916 and died in 1927.

Prince Albert, who died in 1892, eldest son of Edward VII, then Prince of Wales, visited India in 1890 during Lord Lansdowne's time and is sure to have stayed in Government House.

On the half-landing below is a picture of John Zephaniah Holwell, directing the building of the Holwell monument to commemorate the Black Hole sufferers. In his hand can be seen the plan of the monument and in the background the scaffolding and the workmen engaged on its erection.

This portrait is a copy of an original attributed to Zoffany. The original was bought in 1892 by Lord Lansdowne from Holwell's descendants in Canada to whom it had come down from Holwell himself and is now in the Victoria Memorial, Calcutta. Holwell, who was originally a Surgeon in the Company's service and only entered the Civil Service in 1751, was one of the 23 prisoners in the Black Hole who survived out

of 146 who were confined in a cell measuring 14 feet 10 inches by 18 feet from 7 p.m. on 20th June, 1756, till 6 a.m. the following morning by Siraj-ud-Dowlah, Viceroy of Bengal, after he had captured Fort William. The Fort William of those days occupied the space on which the General Post Office, the Customs House and the East Indian Railway Offices now stand and stretched westwards to the banks of the Hooghly. When Governor Drake disgracefully abandoned his trust and left the Fort on the 19th June dropping downstream with all available ships, Holwell took command but the odds were too great for him. Later, in 1758, Holwell was appointed a Member of Council and acted as Governor of Bengal in 1760 when Clive relinquished office.

Next below Governor Holwell's picture is a Morgan copy of a picture by C. A. Mornewick of Lord Canning, Governor General, 1856-1862, of whom mention has been made in describing the Study in the South-West wing. He is wearing the Ribbon and Star of the Order of the Star of India which was created in 1861, so that he was the first Grand Master. It was during his term

of office that the Government of India was transferred from the East India Company to the Crown by a Proclamation on 1st November, 1858, Lord Canning in consequence becoming the first Viceroy. The Proclamation announcing the assumption by the Queen of the title of Empress of India, which is celebrated every year on the 1st January at a Proclamation Parade was not made till 1st January 1877.

It is his wife's tomb which is in the grounds of Barrackpore and there is also a beautiful cenotaph to her in the north verandah of St. John's Church. This cenotaph was originally erected over the grave in Barrackpore Park, but it was found that the weather was spoiling it so it was removed, first to the Calcutta Cathedral and afterwards to St. John's Church, a simpler reproduction being placed over the grave. Lady Canning caught malaria in the Terai while stopping to sketch some scenery when returning from a visit to Darjeeling and died in Government House in 1861.

There is a statue of Lord Canning by T. Brock, R.A., and J. H. Foley, R.A., to the South-West of Government House.



On the landing outside the Throne Room is a Morgan copy of a portrait painted by T. Brigstocke in 1858 of Sir Jung Bahadur of Nepal, G.C.B., G.C.S.I., who rendered invaluable assistance at the head of his gallant Gurkhas in quelling the Indian Mutiny, and one of Lord Hardinge (1844-1848) a copy by W. J. Morgan of a copy by G. F. Clarke of the original by Sir Fraser Grant, P.R.A., which is in the National Portrait Gallery, London. He is wearing the Star of the Order of the Bath. Sir Henry Hardinge, as he was when he assumed office, was the brother-in-law of his predecessor, Lord Ellenborough, and is the grandfather of Lord Hardinge of Penshurst who was Viceroy from 1910-1916 and in whose time the capital was changed from Calcutta to Delhi. He was the first Governor General to come to India by the overland route, i.e., by sailing to Egypt, crossing by land to Suez and resuming the journey by sea from there which halved the amount of time required for the passage to India. He was a professional soldier as well as a politician and not only had served throughout the Peninsular War, but had lost a hand at Ligny. He had been Secretary of State for War in 1828-1830 and again in

1841-1844 and after his return from India was Commander-in-Chief in England from 1852-1856. He spent the greater part of his time in India in the field engaged in the First Sikh War and the large brass cannon in the centre plot outside the South entrance to Government House known as Futteh Jung which was captured at Aliwal was placed there by him.

There is an equestrian statue of him by J. H. Foley, R.A., to the South-East of Government House.

On the half landing below is a portrait of the famous Warren Hastings (1772-1785), the first Governor General, and in the opinion of many the greatest of all and the Governor General who held office for a longer period than any of his successors, never leaving Bengal for 13 years. His life and fortunes are too well known to need any biographical details here including his duel in 1780 with Philip Francis, a Member of his Council, the memory of which is preserved to this day by Duel Avenue close to Belvedere (now called Viceroy's House) to which house Francis who was wounded in the duel was taken. It was to him that the silver sofa under the canopy in the Throne Room belonged. The

picture is a copy by Miss J. Hawkins after the original by A. W. Devis, which is now at New Delhi and was brought from Barrackpore in 1912. The original hung in the Council Chamber in Government House from the time the house was built until the Viceroy moved to Delhi with an interval of 20 years which is accounted for as follows. In 1885 it was sent to England to be cleaned, but the Secretary of State kept it and deposited it in the National Portrait Gallery sending a copy (the one which now hangs on the South-East staircase) in its place in 1887. Lord Curzon agitated for and succeeded in obtaining the return of the original in 1905. At the same time he procured a fresh copy of it by Sephton for the Victoria Memorial Hall which, after he had left, was in error presented to the Calcutta Corporation who refused to give it up and hung it in the Town Hall.

In the background is depicted a marble bust of Warren Hastings' great predecessor, Robert Clive, in a circular frame, but in the copy this has faded out and only with difficulty can even the circular frame be distinguished.

• Below Warren Hastings hangs a picture of the Earl of Elgin (1862-1863). This is a Morgan copy of a Clarke copy of the original by Sir F. Grant, P.R.A. It was Lord Elgin who finished off the dome of Government House by adding the coronal and gallery at the summit. He had been Governor of Jamaica in 1842, Governor General of Canada 1846-1854 and held Cabinet rank as Postmaster General in 1859. He died of heart failure at Dharmasala, where he lies buried, in November, 1863, while on his way from Simla to Calcutta, being one of the three Governors General who have died in India—Cornwallis, Elgin and Mayo.

The picture shows him wearing Levee dress with the Stars of the Thistle and the Bath, the China War Medal and the Ribbon of the Bath.

The next picture is that of Lord Lawrence (1864-1869), Lord Elgin's successor, a Morgan copy of the original by Val Prinsep, R.A. The Viceroy is always *ex-officio* head of the Indian Civil Service, but Sir John Lawrence, "Saviour of the Punjab," as he was when he was made Viceroy, is the only member of the Indian Civil Service to have passed through every stage of

Indian Service from Assistant Magistrate to Viceroy the highest office under the Crown, although a number of Civil Servants acted as Governors General and one, Sir George Barlow (1805-1807), was a substantive Governor General. The picture, painted some time after he had returned to England, shows him with a beard which he never wore in India: what he looked like when he was Viceroy may be seen from the statue of him by T. Woolner, R.A., which faces the South Gate of Government House. It will be remembered that it was he who put the coffered ceilings in the Marble Hall and adjoining rooms and it was he who first established as a matter of routine the moving of the Government of India to Simla during the summer months. When he lived in Government House his main recreation was croquet which he used to play, to the interested delight of a large crowd of spectators in the street, often continuing by lamp-light after darkness had fallen. He was an unsociable but deeply religious man who inaugurated an era of simplicity and economy in the Viceregal household, hated dinners and parties and official civilities, reduced the staff,

declined to encourage racing and refused to give the Viceroy's Cup and instituted Family Prayers in Government House. He used to walk off quietly to Church, St. Andrew's or St. John's, and liked rambling on foot in the bazaars.

His homely ways caused a good deal of offence particularly his habit of working with his coat, waistcoat and collar off and slippers on his feet, but he was a great man and is fittingly buried in Westminster Abbey.

It was during his time that the War with Bhutan took place in 1864 which resulted in the acquisition of the Western Duars of Jalpaiguri District then mainly jungle but now a great tea-growing area, and also the great Orissa famine of 1866 which together with famines in Upper India in 1868 led Lord Lawrence to establish the Irrigation Department.

The picture shows him in Levee dress with the Ribbon of the Star of India and the Stars of the Bath and the Star of India on his breast.

On the ground floor is a picture of Lord Lawrence's successor, the Earl of Mayo (1869-1872), a Morgan-cum-Clarke copy.

The picture shows him dressed in a red coat and black trousers with the mantle of the Star of India and on his breast the Star of St. Patrick. In the background is a view of the South front of Government House, seen through the South-East Gate.

Lord Mayo, as has already been related, was killed by a Pathan convict in the Andamans and lay in State in the Throne Room. Next to his portrait is a picture by A. E. Caddy of the lying-in-state. The coffin is placed on the dais of the Throne and is covered with the Union Jack and the mantle of the Grand Master of the Order of the Star of India. Round the coffin on the lower step are six tall candles. One end of the coffin is turned towards the spectator and upon it is a large silver shield on which are engraved his name and titles and there are some wreaths on the steps round the coffin. The mourners are Major the Hon'ble E. R. Bourke and two of Lord Mayo's children on the left and Lady Mayo with an A.D.C. in attendance on the right.

It was he, as has also been related, who found the pillars in the Marble Hall painted black and all the teak doors painted white and who had

all the pillars re-chunamed and removed the paint from the doors and who preferred the Private Secretary's room to the Viceroy's Study.

During his Viceroyalty the first visit to India was paid by a member of the Royal Family, His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh coming out in 1870-1871 and starting the tone of personal loyalty in Britain's relations with the feudatory princes. Lord Mayo created the Agricultural Department and developed the material resources of the country by an immense extension of roads, railways and canals. He was a man of tremendous vigour, both mental and physical, whose untimely death was a great loss to India. The West window in Calcutta Cathedral, designed by Sir E. Burne Jones is in his memory.

Except for a copy in the North Ball Room of a picture by Von Angeli of Queen Victoria as a young woman these are all the paintings of any interest that remain in Government House to-day.

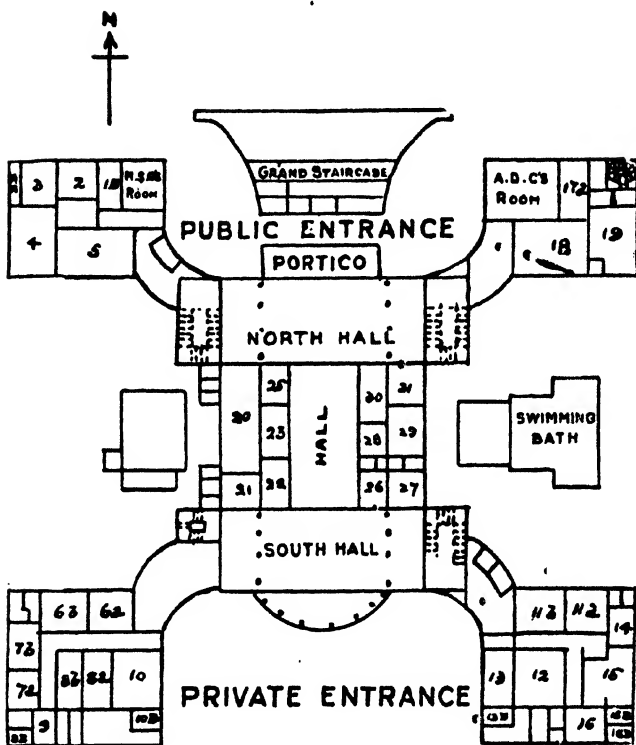
Being now on the **Ground Floor** it will be convenient to describe this before finishing off with a description of the second storey.



# GOVERNMENT HOUSE, CALCUTTA.

## GROUND FLOOR.

Scale 100' = 1"



There have been a great many changes in the arrangement of the rooms, but the history of these is not important, as they are almost entirely devoted to household and administrative purposes.

The plan opposite shows the arrangement of the floor as it is to-day. All visitors to Government House have some knowledge of it since they use either the Public or the Private Entrance on this floor for getting in and out of the house. For ordinary dinner parties up to a hundred guests or so the Public Entree guests are received by an A.D.C. in the North Hall and then pass through the Central Hall, which was paved with grey marble by Lord Curzon, and up the South-East staircase to the Throne Room, while the Private Entree guests are similarly received in the South Hall and then go up to the Throne Room by the South-East staircase. On these occasions the four cloakrooms are adequate for the hats and coats of the guests, but on the occasion of Balls, when 1,800 guests are entertained, the whole of the Central Hall is barricaded off and turned into an auxiliary cloak room, the Public Entree guests mounting to the

Ball Room by the North-East and North-West staircases, while the Private Entree guests use the South-East staircase.

The South end of the Central Hall is ornamented by a very fine double gate of pierced wood work in front of which stands a sentry of the Body Guard and there are four large marble urns in it which from their general style seem likely to have been part of the original ornamentation of the interior just as the twelve Cæsars in the Marble Hall were. There is however a tradition that they were a present from the Maharaja of Jaipur but it has not been found possible to verify this. The history of the gates and when they were put in their present position is not known but it seems clear that they were not made for Government House as they are too big for the central arch which they entirely fill, leaving no room for jambs and hinges. What is certain is that they are not the famous Gates of Somnath which Lord Ellenborough had taken from the tomb of Mahmud of Ghazni after the First Afghan War in 1842 and paraded through Northern India because these are still in the Museum of the Fort at Agra.

The **North-West wing** is entirely occupied by the Military Secretary's Department, its old home, though in Lord Curzon's time it had been shifted to the South-East wing.

The **North-East wing** contains, as it always has done, the A.D.C.'s room and there used to be a billiard table in the room (now used as the library) to the east of it, but in 1932 Sir John Anderson had this brought up and installed on the floor above and at the same time he had the old Secretaries' waiting room next to the Council Chamber turned into a small drawing room, thus providing a convenient suite close to the room where all ordinary meals are served. There is also a small dining room in this wing, a large bedroom and a stone spiral staircase leading to the roof.

In the **North Hall** is a marble statue of Colonel Lord William de la Poer Beresford, v.c., K.C.I.E., 9th Lancers, who was on the personal staff at Government House for nineteen years from 1875 to 1894. For the first six years he was A.D.C. to Lords Northbrook, Lytton and Ripon. In 1881 Lord Ripon made him his Military Secretary, a post which he held for thirteen years

under Lords Ripon, Dufferin and Lansdowne. He was the third son of the fourth Marquis of Waterford and died in 1900 at the early age of 53. He was a great sporting man and his race horse, Myall King, which won the Viceroy's Cup three times, the Governor's Cup and many other races is buried to the East of Government House, Barrackpore. He won his V.C. at the battle of Ulundi in the Zulu War.

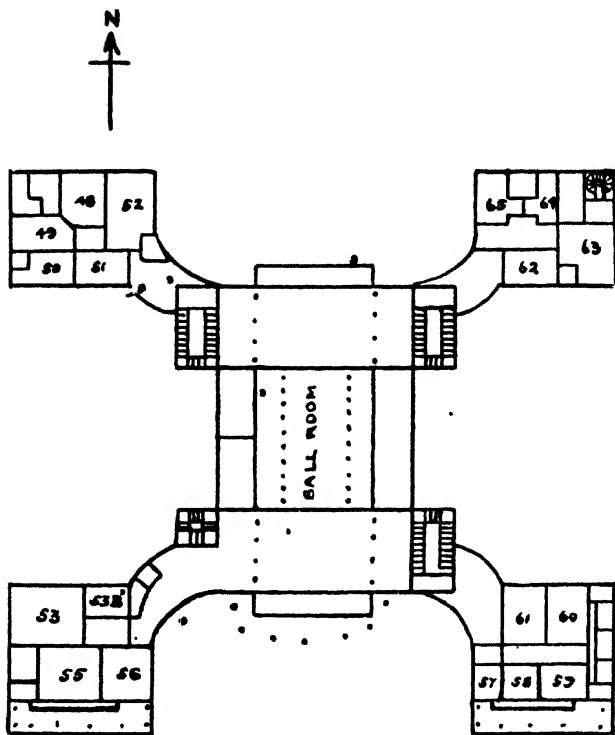
In the **South-East wing** are sleeping quarters for the A.D.C.'s and in the **South-West wing** a number of bedrooms for European servants.

At the foot of the North-West and South-East staircases, respectively, there is a large Burmese gong slung from a pole supported by two carved wood figures of Burmese warriors. From the apparent age of these and the ferocious aspect of the figures it seems probable that these gongs were taken from King Theebaw's Palace.

The **Second Floor**, except for the four wings, which contain nothing but bedrooms, some with sitting rooms and all with bathrooms attached, is now-a-days generally used only once a year for the Government House Ball in the cold weather season.

# GOVERNMENT HOUSE, CALCUTTA.

## SECOND FLOOR.



Lord Curzon relates as a point of interest that in 1899 his subsequent colleague, Winston Churchill, who was very nearly being a member of his staff (presumably as an A.D.C. as he was then only 25 while Curzon himself was but 39) immersed himself for hours daily in his room in the South-East wing writing his book on the Omdurman Campaign.

The **Southern Drawing Room**, above the present Throne Room, was entirely devoid of any furniture until the middle of the last century except for mirrors hung there by Lord Wellesley which were sold in 1841 as they had lost all their quicksilver, and it was only in Lord Mayo's time (1869-1872) that it was at all adequately furnished in preparation for the visit to Calcutta in 1870-71 of Queen Victoria's second son, His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh, then aged 26, the first member of the Royal Family to visit India. A suite Louis XVI, gilt furniture was ordered from Paris for the purpose with pink silk upholstery which has been renewed from time to time in various colours. Lord Curzon purchased a suite of Empire furniture for the second storey for the visit of the Prince and

Princess of Wales in 1905. The mirror surmounted by a peacock which now hangs at the East end of this room came from the palace of King Theebaw at Mandalay in the time of Lord Dufferin (1884-1888) during whose Viceroyalty the Third Burmese War was fought.

Until the rooms on the first floor of the South-East wing were arranged as they are to-day, this room was used as the Drawing Room after large dinner parties, but now that the first floor has been adapted so as to meet the needs of every kind of party it, like the Ball Room, is only used once a year, the Viceroy and Vicereine and notabilities sitting in it between dances.

The **Central Ball Room** is a very interesting room historically for it was the scene of the first great revels held in Government House after its opening in 1803 and in commemoration of this Lord Curzon in 1903 gave a fancy dress ball in which the costumes worn were those of the period of 1803. The costume worn by Lord Curzon was a replica of that worn by Lord Wellesley and is now in the Victoria Memorial Hall.



From 1803 till about 1863 this room was the Throne Room, in which durbars, levees, investitures and receptions were held by the Governors General. Up the centre, on the occasion of the State Balls, have walked in stately procession every Governor General from Lord Wellesley to the present Viceroy and many members of the Royal Family also.

It is lit, as is the Marble Hall and the other public rooms, by a large number of cut-glass chandeliers (there are altogether 68 of these in Government House in addition to a large number of cut glass girandoles). The original chandeliers and mirrors were purchased by Lord Wellesley at the sale of the effects of General Claude Martin which was held in Lucknow in 1801 at his fantastic palace of Constantia now known as La Martiniere. In the succeeding century the chandeliers were frequently added to or repaired, usually by the firm of Osler & Co., and Lord Curzon found the old and the new jumbled up in a most incongruous fashion, but it was easy to distinguish which was which so he had them rehung in the various apartments after sorting them out. A good many were

taken away to New Delhi. Only one of the original chandeliers remains and is in the curved corridor leading from the Throne Room to the Brown Drawing Room. The difference between it and the new ones is that it is composed of a number of long glass prisms instead of cut glass drops.

There is little to be added about the **North Ball Room**. Mention has already been made of the picture of Queen Victoria after Angeli which hangs here. At State Balls when the Viceroy is present the Governor between dances sits here on a dais with troopers of the Body Guard standing behind him.

This completes the description of the interior of Government House and its contents. The next chapter will deal with the exterior and the grounds. .

## CHAPTER III.

### The Exterior.

**W**HEN the architect handed over the completed mansion to Lord Wellesley in 1803 it was in main essentials the same outside as it is now—with one conspicuous difference.

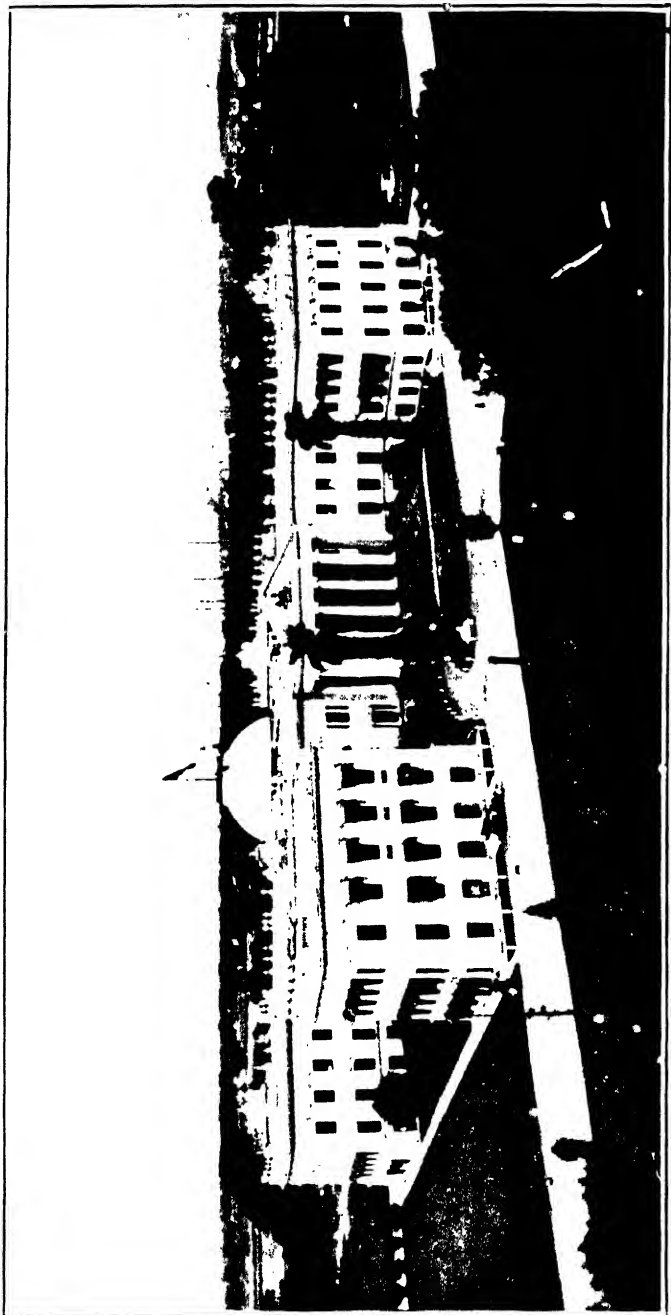
Engravings and photographs prior to the year 1870 show that until about that year there was scarcely a tree or a plant in the compound. The house stood up stark in the centre of a railed enclosure and the great masonry gateways which now fit so well into their framework of tall trees loomed gaunt and incongruous in comparison with the low railings on either side of them.

These four great external gateways consisting of masonry arches surmounted by sculptured lions and sphinxes (the lions on the main, or 'central,' arch and the sphinxes on the lower side arches) are a part of the original fabric and are frequently mentioned in the official announcements of Lord Wellesley's time. When the house was illuminated



GOVERNMENT HOUSE, 1824.

SEATTLE HOTEL IN 1900



in honour of the numerous Peaces that were concluded at that period, they were decorated with lamps and transparencies. When the gates were first erected the lions and sphinxes were not placed upon them but were added shortly afterwards by a local carver and decorator named Wollaston who was a sort of handy-man for all such jobs. The first sphinxes were made of clay and the lions of wood but there seems to have been difficulty in arriving at animals of suitable appearance and proportions for the accounts in the first ten years after the completion of the house testify to frequent experiments. Eventually, in 1814, they were all made of teak wood but these have since disappeared and the images that adorn the summits of the gateways now are made of brick covered with cement and paint. A contemporary skit by Sir Charles D'Oyly (*Tom Raw the Griffin*: "A burlesque poem describing the adventures of a cadet in the East India Company's Service." By a civilian officer of the East India Establishment, London, 1828), to which and to the notes appended to it, is owed knowledge of many amusing details about Government House in its first twenty-five years of existence, says that originally the sphinxes had plaster

breasts which were cut off by order of an A.D.C. who thought that Lord Wellesley might be shocked by their exuberance. This, however, probably refers to the two sphinxes at the bottom of the Grand Staircase which, together with the iron railing running up either side of it, are also original features of the house.

It can only be conjectured that the omission to plant trees was deliberate with the idea that Government House should stand out as a prominent landmark no matter how much of seclusion and privacy its occupants might lose as a result. If this was a deliberate policy, it was just as deliberately reversed by Lords Mayo (1869), Northbrook (1872) and Lytton (1876) to whom is largely owed the delightfully private and well-timbered grounds which exist to-day.

The area of the grounds is large. Sir William Hunter writing in the Imperial Gazetteer in 1885 gave it as eight acres, but this figure was very wide of the mark. Before Lord Wellesley commenced operations, the ground occupied by the old Government House and Council House together—both of which were taken for the purpose—amounted to over 20 bighas (7 acres).

Considerable purchases were made of surrounding land and in Simm's survey of 1850 the area of Government House and compound are given as more than 75 bighas (25 acres). Later surveys return the area as over 81 bighas or 27 acres and upon this area the present municipal assessment for taxes is based. Government House and the North compound aggregate an area of 39 bighas, the South compound being 42 bighas in area.

The chief differences which Lord Wellesley would notice in the house itself, were he to come to life again now, would be due to changes for which Lord Curzon was largely responsible. He broke the monotonous level of the parapet, unrelieved by a single ornament, by placing upon it urns at regular intervals. These are a familiar feature of houses of similar classical design in England and he procured a number of drawings from Chatsworth and other places, experimenting with different shapes and sizes in plaster. It would scarcely be believed by anyone looking at them from below that these vases are over six feet in height.

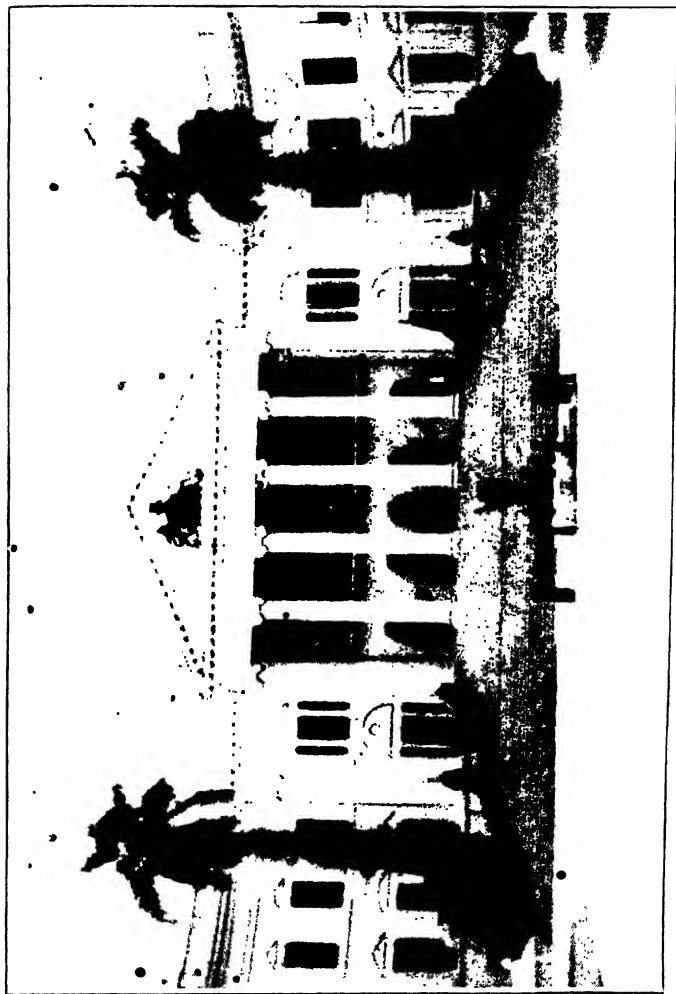
Another change made during the past century has been the number of projecting green wooden



sunshades fixed to many of the windows looking towards the sun.

Some mystery attaches to the gigantic coats-of-arms standing up against the sky on the parapets of the four wings. It was always intended that there should be four of these, two bearing the Royal Arms and two the Arms of the East India Company, and an illustration in Mrs. Graham's journal of 1810 represents all four in position but Lord Curzon says that he doubts whether the two on the Northern front existed before his time. The Bengal Gazetteer of 1841 said:—"The wings on the southern side are surmounted by the Royal Arms. Those on the northern side are ornamented by the Hon'ble Company's but none are at present visible." Early engravings of a reliable character clearly show all four in position while photographs show only the Arms on the Southern wings. A possible explanation is that the East India Company's Arms were removed in 1858 when the Crown took over the Government of India.

When Lord Curzon came he found Arms only on the South side, but these were of so portentous a description, both the lion and the unicorn



GOVERNMENT HOUSE, NORTH FRONT, 1935



transcending all bounds even of oriental imagination, that he decided to erect new ones on each wing. These, which are the ones in existence to-day, were constructed in cast iron by Messrs. Macfarlane of Glasgow. At the same time Lord Curzon filled the empty tympanum of the pediment on the North front, which had remained unadorned for a century, with a cast-iron representation of the Royal Arms, the cost of the five being £1,300 and the weight 100 tons according to Lord Curzon, but he seems to have taken the shipping tonnage of the packing cases in which they were sent out which is calculated on their cubic content and not on weight. Their actual weight is about 40 tons.

<sup>1</sup> One feature of the exterior has been the subject of many vicissitudes and of infinite jest. This is the dome erected over the projecting curved portico on the Southern side from which a very fine view can be obtained by anybody who dares the climb over the sloping surface by means of the wooden rungs on its North side. • When the house was first built, the dome was not there but it was added shortly afterwards, certainly before 1805, to increase the apparent elevation

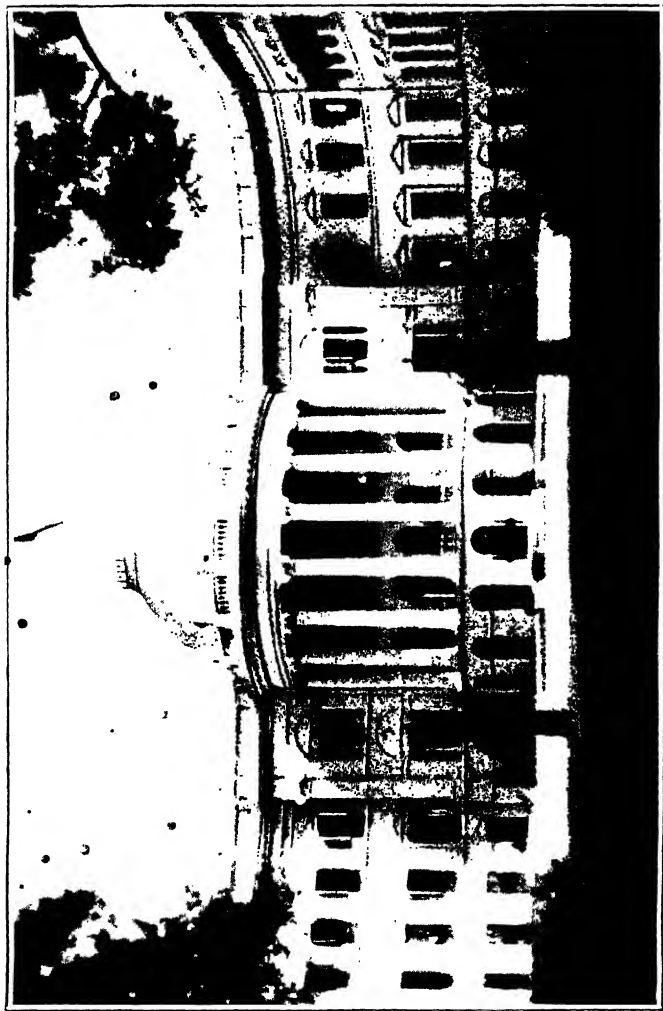
at a cost (and it was made of wood) of sicca rupees 30,000 or £3,750! From an early date the dome seems to have been the butt of the local wits and the facetious Tom Raw (Sir Charles D'Oyly, a civil servant of the East India Company) in 1834 thus reflected popular opinion while, incidentally, revealing the very practical purposes to which the dome was turned:—

One word about the dome—'tis so superior  
In every way to domes of brick or stone.  
It covers nought below! but ripens sherry or  
Madeira—a wood box, perched up alone,  
To aid proportion and for dumpiness to atone.

Later, in Lord Curzon's time the inside, was used for storing empty trunks but now it is not used for anything.

In 1824 the original dome, on the grounds that it was too heavy as well as being hideous, was taken down and replaced by another at a cost of Rs. 36,700 !

On the top of this second dome was placed a statue of a mighty female holding a spear and shield—nobody knew whether she was Minerva or Britannia—but almost immediately, Government House was struck by lightning so the spear was altered in case it was the cause of the



GOVERNMENT HOUSE, SOUTH FRONT, 1935.



calamity. In the old prints which hang in the North-East corridor on the first floor illustrations of both these domes may be seen.

In 1829—after 5 years only—both the dome and the figure erected at so huge a cost were in such bad condition that a Committee was appointed to examine and report on them as a result of which they were patched up but were again struck by lightning in 1838 and considerably damaged. In 1852 Lord Dalhousie had both the dome and the figure removed and the iron dome of to-day substituted at a cost of Rs. 13,420 or £1,340. At the same time the pedestal of the dome was raised in order to give it a less squat appearance and its exterior was painted a golden bronze. When Lord Curzon was in India there were persons still living in Calcutta who declared that they remembered Government House without a dome at all. The explanation as above was forthcoming some years later when Lord Dalhousie's correspondence was published. In a letter, dated 18th September 1852, he said: "There was a great dome on this house which was taken down last year to prevent it tumbling down. They now propose to put up



the new one; it will take three months and the house will not be habitable while the work is going on." From this it is clear that there was an interval of about a year in which the building was domeless. The flagstaff was first put up in 1862 and in 1863 Lord Elgin added a coronal and gallery to finish off the summit. As an architectural feature the dome redeems the monotony of a skyline too aggressively horizontal but it has no structural justification since it is not visible from within being merely laid down like a dish-cover on the flat roof. It is now painted a silver colour and is undoubtedly both decorative and imposing and excites neither the ridicule of man nor the wrath of heaven.

The compound on the North side of Government House remains much as it was in 1803. There were however white posts and chains on either side of the carriage drive which runs East and West in front of the Grand Staircase. A few of these still remain on the south side of the drive. Lord Ellenborough (1842-1844) set up on a plinth in front of the Grand Staircase the huge iron gun mounted on a winged dragon with red glass eyes and tremendous scaled convolutions of

the tail ending in a forked point. Around the plinth are ten iron guns with embossed Chinese inscriptions planted upright in the ground. The inscription on the plinth is:—"Edward Lord Ellenborough, Governor General of India in Council, erected this trophy of guns taken from the Chinese, in commemoration of the peace dictated under the walls of Nankin by the Naval and Military forces of England and India under the command of Vice-Admiral Sir William Parker and of Lieutenant-General Sir Hugh Gough (1842)."

The war which ended in the Treaty of Nankin consisted of two phases. Since the middle of the 17th century European traders had established themselves somewhat precariously in China and the East India Company had the monopoly of British trade. The Chinese disliked foreigners and imposed vexatious regulations and restrictions on them. In particular, and with reason, the mandarins objected to the introduction by the British of opium from India into China where it was seized upon avidly. The British were determined to trade as equals and not as vassals, which was the relationship insisted upon by the Emperor and the mandarins, and as a matter of

diplomacy to remove a cause of friction, they agreed to stop the import of opium and destroyed all the stocks they held. This seemed to be regarded as a sign that the British were afraid of the Chinese and was followed by impossible demands which the British Government considered to amount to a *casus belli*. War was declared in 1840 and resulted in the signing of a treaty of peace in 1841 by which an indemnity of six million dollars was agreed to be paid to the British and there was ceded a jungle-covered island called Hong-Kong at the mouth of the bay at the head of which the port of Canton stood at the South-East corner of China. When this treaty reached the Imperial Government at Peking they refused to ratify it and so hostilities were resumed. Gough was sent from Madras by Ellenborough to assume command of the troops at Canton and in May 1841 the forts defending that port were carried. Admiral William Parker arrived in July and Gough commanded the troops in the combined operations which then took place. The British Naval and Military forces swept up the coast of China from Canton capturing every big port as they went—Amoy, Foo-Chow, Ning-Po and Shanghai—and then went up the Yang-

tze-Kiang River and captured the fortified city of Chin-Kiang which guarded the approach to Nankin, the Southern Imperial Capital. Nankin would then have fallen but the Chinese, to avert such a disaster, sued for peace the terms of which, as is related in the inscription on the gun, were dictated under the walls of Nankin and included an indemnity of twenty-one million dollars, the ratification of the cession of Hong-Kong and the declaring open to foreign trade of the ports of Amoy, Foo-Chow, Ning-Po and Shanghai, which are known to this day as the Treaty Ports.

Lord Ellenborough also placed in position the two brass cannon in front of the North-East and North-West wings, respectively. The one outside the A.D.C.'s room in the North-East wing is embossed with a Moghul pattern and has two pairs of heavy brass carrying rings attached to the barrel. The inscription on its base is: "Meeanee, 17th February, Hyderabad 20th March, 1843" and it was set up in honour of the victories of Sir Charles Napier and the annexation of Sind. Sind was annexed at a time when the Court of Directors were objecting strongly to any further increase of territory and

consequent responsibility and despatches announcing fresh conquests were more likely to be replied to by censure rather than praise. In view of this attitude, Sir Charles Napier is said to have announced the conquest of Sind by the single word "Peccavi"—"I have Sinned."

The gun outside the Military Secretary's room in the North-West wing is heavily embossed and the handles on the top of the barrel are in the shape of two dogs. The inscription on the base is: "Ghuznee 6th September, Cabul 16th September, 1842" and it commemorates the successes of Generals Nott and Pollock in the First Afghan War waged to avenge the catastrophe of the previous year when a British Army of 4,500 men with 12,000 camp followers under General Elphinstone evacuated Kabul in the depths of winter of whom only one, Dr. Bryden, reached Jalalabad.

On the West side of the house there are two German naval guns captured from the Turks in Mesopotamia in the Great War, 1914-1918.

On the South side there are eleven guns in all, of which three have been in position since the house was first occupied. Two of these are

the two brass cannon on the grass plots right and left of the curved portico which were placed there by Lord Wellesley, the builder of the house. The muzzles and the hubs of the wheels are shaped in the form of a tiger's head and at the ends of the spokes of each wheel are brass tiger's paws. The inscription on them is: "Seringapatam, 4th May, 1799" the action in which Tippu Sultan, whose seat is in the Throne Room, was slain. Seringapatam had been stormed in 1792 by Lord Cornwallis after which, Tippu ceded half his dominions. After Lord Wellesley's storming seven years later the remainder was annexed.

Immediately in front of the Private Entrance is a large plain brass cannon captured at Aliwal and known as Futteh Jung placed there by Viscount Hardinge in commemoration of the First Sikh War. Round the plinth are the names and dates:—"Moodke, December 18th 1845;" "Ferozeshur, December 21st and 22nd 1845;" and • "Subraon, February 10th 1846." The historical significance of these entries briefly is that General Sir Hugh Gough (afterwards Viscount Gough of whom mention has already been made in describing the Chinese guns on the North

side) fought an indecisive action at Moodke on 18th December, 1845, the Sikh entrenchments at Ferozeshur were stormed four days later, Sir Harry Smith defeated the Sikhs at Aliwal on 21st January, 1846, and Sir Hugh Gough fought a desperate battle at Subraon on the 10th February, 1846, which resulted in the rout of the Sikh Army.

On the same central plot and in front of Futteh Jung are two small brass mortars with the inscription "Mandalay, Burma, 1885-1886." These were captured from King Theebaw during the Third Burmese War in the time of Lord Dufferin and cut on the barrels are the words:—"Compagnie des Indes De France. Fait par Gor à Paris 1751" which indicate that they had a varied career before they were captured by the British some hundred and thirty years after they were cast.

Southwards from Futteh Jung on the edge of the main lawn are four brass guns in a semi-circle, the two outside ones being large and the inner ones small. The two outside ones were also captured in the Third Burmese War along

with the mortars described above and the inscriptions on their plinths are the same—"Mandalay, Burma, 1885-1886." The one on the East (or left side looking from the house) is a large plain brass gun with Burmese writing cut on the barrel while its opposite number on the West has on the barrel finely chased handles in the shape of dolphins and a coat-of-arms in relief under which are the initials "A. G. F."

Between these guns are two most interesting trophies. The one to the East is a small brass gun captured at Seringapatam in the time of Lord Wellesley's predecessor, Lord Cornwallis of Permanent Settlement fame. This is the earliest prize gun in the grounds and was probably transferred to the present Government House by Lord Wellesley when he first occupied it. It is of French make with dolphins as handles and a heavily embossed coat-of-arms together with the inscription "A DOUAY PAR BERENGER 4-7-77." The inscription on the plinth is merely "French gun at Seringapatam, 1789." The gun on the West edge of the drive is particularly interesting because not only is it the oldest gun in the grounds, having been cast



in 1630 when Charles<sup>I</sup> was on the Throne of England but also because it provides a link with Lord Roberts. It is a small brass gun with handles in the shape of dolphins and a man-of-war in full sail embossed on the barrel and a cut inscription "ASSUERUS KOSTER ME FECIT AMSTELREDAMI 1630" (A. Koster made me at Amsterdam in 1630) and also the monogram of the Dutch East India Company—V. G. C. The inscription on the plinth is "Dutch gun at Cabul, 1879."

This gun was captured at the beginning of the Second Afghan War during the Viceroyalty of Lord Lytton (1876-1880) which started with the murder of Sir Louis Cavagnari, the British Envoy at Kabul, on 3rd September, 1879, upon which a British Force under General Sir Frederick Roberts, as he then was, advanced on Kabul which was entered on the 9th October the Amir Yakub Khan then abdicating. Hostilities, however, broke out again in the following year, made memorable by names such as Maiwand and Kandahar (to the relief of which Roberts marched 10,000 men, 313 miles in 22 days), and the war was only brought to.

conclusion in the Autumn of 1830. This gun must have had an even more varied career than the two brass mortars during the two hundred and fifty years which elapsed before it was captured by the British.

The remaining two pieces of ordnance, which are some distance in front, on either side of the carriage drive, are two long iron guns, with four big carrying rings on each, both of which are trophies of the Third Burmese War of 1885-1886 so that no fewer than six of the eleven pieces of ordnance to the South of the house are relics of this campaign. As there are so many, it may be of interest to recall the main features of this war which resulted in the annexation of Upper Burma. The First Burmese War in 1824 in the time of Lord Amherst (whose picture hangs in the small dining room) had been fought because the Burmese continually encroached on British India and it resulted in the cession of Assam (then an independent kingdom overrun by the Burmese) and the provinces of Arakan and Tenasserim—that is to say all the seaboard of Burma except the mouth of the Irrawaddy. The Second Burmese War in 1852, in the time

of Lord Dalhousie, arose out of the ill-treatment of some European merchants at Rangoon and the insults offered to the Captain of a British frigate who had been sent to remonstrate and resulted in the annexation of the province of Pegu which cut off all remaining access to the sea, the kingdom of Burma being reduced to what is to-day known as Upper Burma.

The Third Burmese War in 1885 was the result of a long period of ~~strained~~ relations between the Burmese and British Governments brought to a culmination by the cruelty and arrogance of King Theebaw. War was declared and a mixed Naval and Military force moved rapidly up the Irrawaddy in a flotilla and took the Burmese completely by surprise. Within a fortnight King Theebaw was taken prisoner in Mandalay, his capital, his army surrendered and the remainder of Burma was annexed. Operations, however, continued into 1886 in order to subdue bands of soldiery who formed themselves into gangs of dacoits and ravaged the country.

The garden to the South of the house, now so pretty with its great lawns and beds of flowers

backed by leafy walks and curving ponds only began to assume its present form under the fostering care of Lady Mayo (1869-1872) and Lady Lytton (1876-1880). Before then it was much like the compound of any mufassal house—an expanse of rough grass with cows grazing. There had been sporadic attempts from time to time to plant a few flowers near the house as may be gathered from the following passage in one of the letters of Miss Emily Eden, sister of Lord Auckland (1835-1842), after whom the Eden Gardens are named, dated 14th April 1841:—“Lady Amherst (1823-1828) made a magnificent garden round the house, which stands in the centre of what we call a huge compound. Lady William Bentinck (1828-1835) said flowers were very unwholesome and had everything rooted out in the first week. I never thought of restoring it till last year and now it is all done very economically, and only one side of the house and at a considerable distance. I am just finishing two little fish ponds.”

Lady Mayo started planning on a bigger scale and began the planting of the trees, while in Lord Lytton's time the ornamental water and

arched masonry bridge as well as the raised mound at the southern extremity of the garden were constructed at a cost of Rs. 11,000.

It would be difficult to give an account of the trees in the compound without introducing a large number of botanical terms conveying almost nothing to the layman. It is proposed therefore to mention only those which are of especial interest or beauty singling out one specimen of each which can be easily indicated and leaving ~~it to~~ those who are interested to identify others of the same species wherever they may occur. For this purpose the following description takes the form of a walk round the grounds starting from the Grand Staircase on the North of the house. On either side of the Grand Staircase is a tall palm tree covered with creeper. These are Royal Palms (*Oreodoxa regia*) and they are over seventy years old. The creeper which covers them is of the fig category, called *Ficus repens*. The creeper which covers the railings of the Grand Staircase is *Bignonia purpurea*. On the grass plots just in front of the curving wings of the house are groups of Ceylon Palm (*Chrysalidocarpus lutescens*) and growing up the wall under the pediment of the

Grand Staircase are creepers called *Adenocalymna nitida*.

Near the corners of the lawns on either side of the Chinese gun are two trees planted in 1935 called *Caesalpinia crista* one of the most beautiful of Calcutta's cold-weather flowering trees which in five years' time will be a striking sight. The creepers on the lamp posts bordering the drive are mainly Bougainvillea. The large tree on the left or West side of the North Gate is the Rain Tree (*Pithecolobium Saman*) a very handsome tree with a pretty pink flower and leaves that are sensitive to moisture, closing as soon as rain starts to fall. On the other side of the gate is the Asoka Tree (*Saraca indica*) whose foliage is faintly like that of a Brownea. From the North Gate to the North-West corner of the grounds the trees in the fringe are Debdars; *Sterculia alata*; Peepul (*Ficus religiosa*) and an Alexandrian Laurel (*Calophyllum inophyllum*) right in the North-West corner in front of a tall and rather ragged Casuarina. This laurel is a bushy tree with dark green glossy leaves which in the monsoon and at the end of the cold weather puts out small very sweet scented white flowers.

The line of tall trees running South from the North-West corner of the grounds and screening the kitchen are Indian Cork trees (*Millingtonia hortensis*). Immediately on the South side of the North-West Gate is a clump of Giant Bamboos (*Dendrocalamus giganteus*). Walking along the drive past the West side of the house the two groups of palms that are seen on the left hand close to the house are Chinese Palms (*Livistona chinensis*) while the clump of trees on the right in the centre of the lawn between the two German guns is composed of Debdar, Jamun and Palm trees. Immediately to the West of this clump in the marginal fringe two very tall trees stand up. These are *Sterculia alata* and have fine buttressed stems. Directly to the South of them is a small bushy tree with tiny light-green foliage called the Candle Tree (*Parmentiera cerifera*), which is very interesting because the flowers grow straight out of the trunk instead of at the ends of the branches and its fruit hangs down like bunches of tallow candles.

The flowering shrubs which line the North edge of the drive from the South-West corner of the house to the South-West Gate are Oleanders and

the large tree overhanging the drive in front of the South-West Gate is the Mahua (*Bassia latifolia*) which has a very sweet smelling flower. Turning left by the South-West Gate and going down the ~~foot~~ path on the West of the Garden Party Lawn the first tree at the North-West corner of the lawn is the Debdar (*Polyalthia longifolia*) and between it and the bold clump of Chinese Palms ahead is a singularly beautiful tree—at present three years old—the *Gliricidia maculata*, which produces a pale pink blossom all along its leafless branches in March. Immediately to the West of the *Gliricidia*, in the fringe, the only tall tree is the White Silk-Cotton Tree (*Eriodendron anfractuosum*). About twenty yards before reaching the avenue which runs East and West there is, in the fringe, an interesting tree called the Looking Glass Tree (*Heritiera littoralis*). Its large leaves, silvery underneath, allow shadows to strike clearly on them in bright sunshine and give a dazzling effect when looked at from underneath. Turning left up the avenue which is lined on either side with handsome spreading fig trees of various kinds, the tall tree near the corner with grey bark and a



buttressed stem is the Arjun (*Terminalia Arjuna*), a smaller specimen standing opposite it. The third tree on the South side of the avenue is a fine specimen of the Talipot Palm (*Corypha umbra-culifera*) with colossal leaves. Half way to the main central drive, a small winding path leads North. There are two trees on the Garden Party Lawn to the West of this path. The one nearest the Burmese gun is the Dhak or Flame of the Forest (*Butea frondosa*) and the round small tree between the Dhak and the avenue is a Brownea (*Brownea grandiceps*). Going along the avenue till the main South drive is reached a number of water lilies (*Nymphaea*) with red, white and yellow flowers are to be seen in the lakes as well as the giant water-lily of South America (*Victoria regia*). This has immense circular leaves from five to seven feet in diameter with three or four inches of upturned edge, and it was first introduced in 1933. It reproduced itself spontaneously for the first time in 1935. In the South-West corner of the East lake is a group of aquatic palms (*Nipa fruticans*). Turning right down the South drive and then right again along the winding foot-path which skirts the South side of the West lake there is, close to the South drive, an uncommon

palm called *Areca madagascarensis*. Turning left before reaching the bamboo tunnel leading to the bridge there is, immediately in front, an African Oil Palm (*Elaeis guineensis*) standing up in the centre of a clump of Chinese Palms. This palm now reproduces itself spontaneously. Going on down the path towards the South gate there is on the left, on the South side of the triangular patch of grass, a small round-headed tree with thick leathery leaves called *Clusia rosea* and standing above the West side of the South gate is a Jamun Tree (*Eugenia jambolana*) which bears a juicy black fruit like a damson but with a peculiar flavour of its own.

Going back to the house up the South drive the main feature consists of two huge and magnificent India Rubber Trees (*Ficus elastica*) on either side of the drive close to the circle of guns. The creepers growing on the lamp posts in front of the Private Entrance are all *Jacquemontia violacea*, bearing a pretty blue flower except for the lamp posts which stand at the corners of the two wings. The left hand, or westerly, one is covered with *Bignonia venusta* while the right hand one is covered with *Bignonia Unguis-Cati*.

Turning now to the right and going to the South-East gate there is a Frangipani or Temple-flower Tree (*Plumeria acutifolia*) at the corner of the shrubbery South of the gate and in the fringe to the South of the gate is a long line of tall Debdar trees. Another specimen Debdar mounts guard on the North-East corner of the lawn matching the one at the West end of the drive. A few yards South of this Debdar, on the lawn, is a *Cassia javanica* which bears lovely sweet-scented pink flowers in April and May. Halfway between the specimen Debdar and the Cassia is a Ceylon Palm between which and the Debdar in the forefront of the shrubbery is a good specimen of *Milettia ovalifolia* which is a fine sight in March when leafless and in full flower. Going now to the swimming bath, where there are two groups of Ceylon Palms known to be over 30 years old, there are several creepers on the pergolas round the pool. On the South pergola there is a creeper called *Adenocorympha nitida* with an orange-coloured flower, on the East front of the pool there is a sweet scented white creeper called *Stephanotis floribunda*, while on the North pergola there is first Jacquemontia, then in the centre *Clematis flammula*, while to the West of

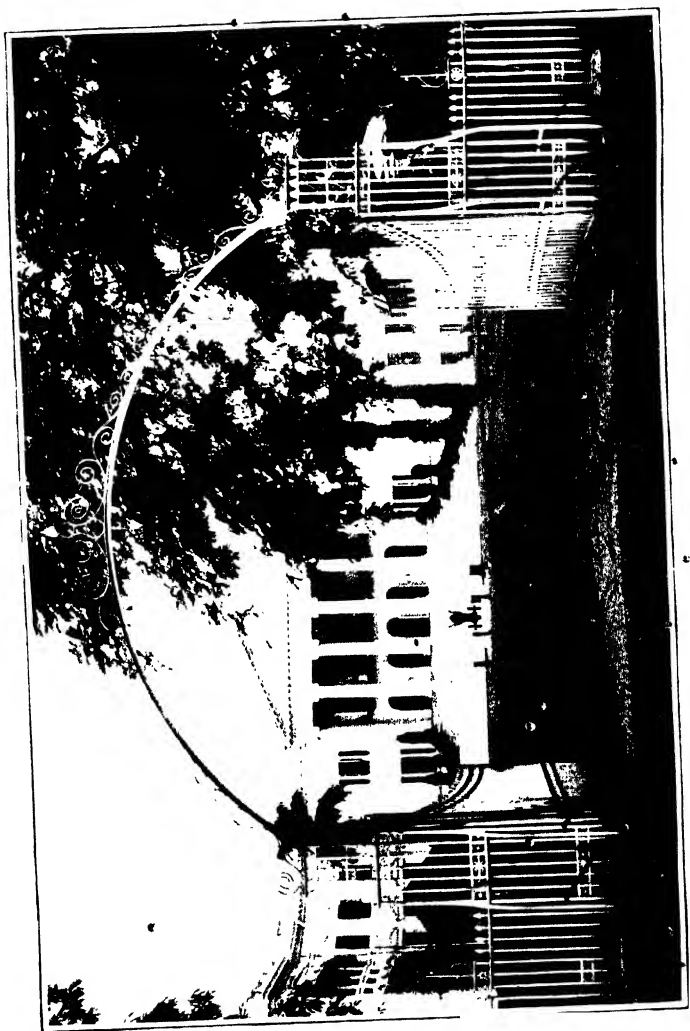
this there is *Congea tomentosa* and at the West end *Petrea volubilis* which bears beautiful blue flowers in March. Going on to the North-East gate there is a line of very tall upright trees stretching from the gate Northwards. The first tree in this line is *Putranjiva Roxburghii* and near it are one or two Bead trees (*Adenanthera paronina*) in whose seed pods are bright scarlet shiny seeds used as beads and counters. The rest of the trees are Debdars. The large tree in the section of the fringe running from the North-East corner of the grounds to the North Gate is a Banyan (*Ficus bengalensis*), a magnificent specimen of which is at Barrackpore. The smaller and more bushy trees in this section are Asoka trees. Overhanging the room where the Visitors' Book is kept is a Neem Tree (*Melia Azadirachta*) whose leaves and twigs have so many uses in India.

To turn now to a general description of the remainder of the grounds, the drive running East and West past the Private Entrance connecting up the two big masonry gateways was from the earliest days of the house until Lord Minto's time (1905-1910) like its counterpart on the North side of the house bordered by white posts and

chains. As early as 1806 it was recorded that the chains were so loosely fixed that they were stolen and had to be replaced. The original wooden posts were replaced by stone ones in 1823 and in the same year the wooden paling with which the South compound was originally enclosed was replaced by the plastered balustrade which exists to-day. It was not till 1844 that the South gates leading on to the Maidan were made, though they were different from the ones which are now there which, as will be seen later, date from 1911. The gates of 1844 were hung on two large stone pillars and were the same pattern as the gates in the four big gateways. There was a curved iron rail connecting the two pillars from which a lamp hung over the centre of the gateway, and there were two smaller stone pillars connected with the main gate posts by iron railings.

To the East of the house there is now a lawn on which tennis is played and in the enclosure between the two wings of the house there is a swimming pool constructed by Lord Lytton, Governor of Bengal (1922-1927). Before the swimming pool came into existence its site was occupied by a hard tennis court which had originally been made by Lord Dufferin in 1881





NORTH GATE BEFORE 1911.

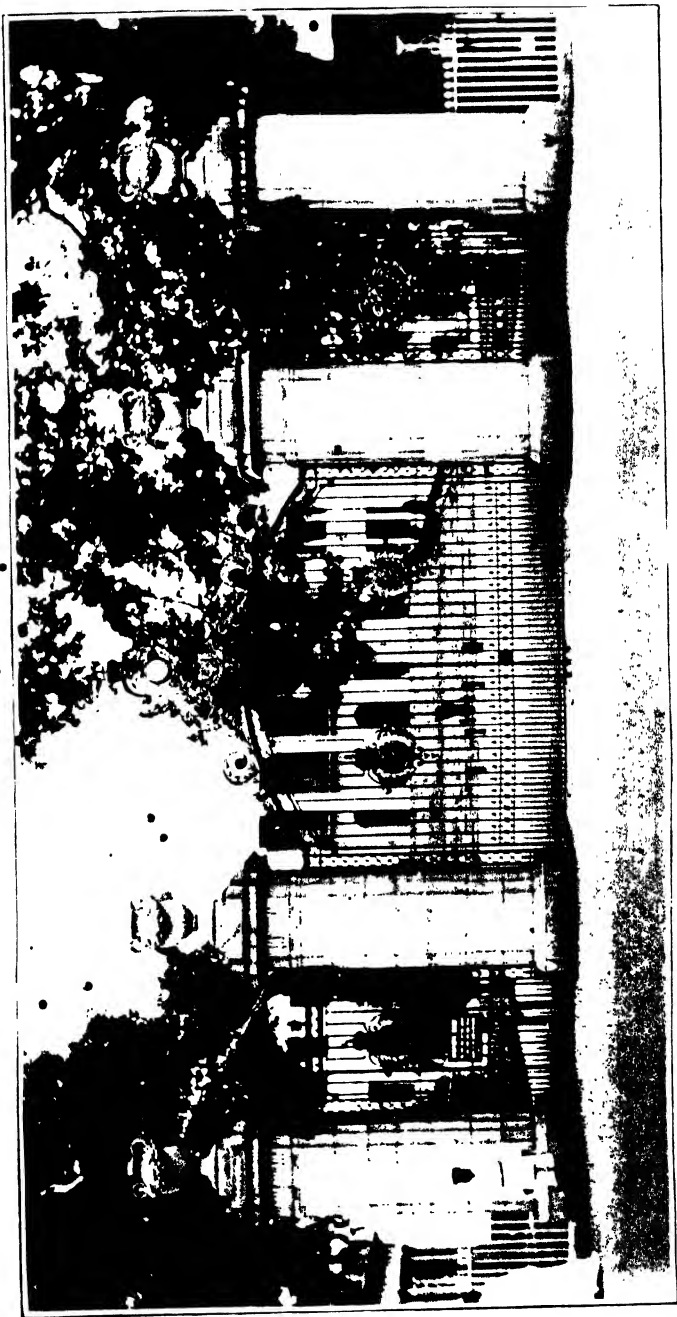
with an asphalt floor and wooden walls. Before that there was a platform there on which the Viceroy's Band used to play during entertainments.

The grounds are enclosed on the North side and as far as the two big gates South-East and South-West of the house by the original iron railings put up by Lord Wellesley (though the railings on the West side were not completed till 1825) and the iron gates, the tops of whose bars are arranged in a semi-circular curve to reflect the masonry arch above, are also the original gates. Lord Curzon refers contemptuously to them as being mean and thought that they would have discredited a workhouse, but in many people's eyes the unusual curved contour of their tops and their unpretentious simplicity fit well with the proportions and rather severe design of the massive and lofty arches in which they are set. Lord Curzon, however, obtained sanction for an entire new set and procured designs from the best iron-workers in England. But he left India before matters got any further and his successor, Lord Minto, left things as they were. In preparation for the visit of the King and Queen, though, in 1911 Lord Hardinge put up



new large wrought-iron gates with the Royal Cypher in the centre at the South and North entrances with fresh pillars of Surajpur stone at a cost of £2,000. Before that, the exit into Wellesley Place was by means of curved iron gates similar to those set in the four big gateways but which hung on iron railings which at this point were slightly higher than the rest. Over the top of the gates was a curved iron rail ornamented with wrought-iron scroll work and a rod or chain in the centre from which to hang a lamp. Photographs of this gate and the old South gate are in the office of the Superintendent, Governor's Estates. Until the new North gate was put up in 1911, this was not a public entrance and was only used for domestic purposes.

At this point it would be convenient to mention some of the domestic arrangements which used to obtain in Government House. Large as was the building and extensive the compound, both were unequal to accommodating the enormous number of persons, menial and otherwise, who were required for its service as the years passed and the conditions which ruled when the house was built became more complex. Calcutta society had, in



NORTH GATE AFTER 1911.



the course of the 19th century, swollen to such dimensions, the crowd of cold weather visitors had become so great and the volume of work of every description so overwhelming that the necessary instruments for coping with the triple burden could not be compressed within the available space. Premises for offices and servants' quarters were acquired from time to time as need dictated in a haphazard way mainly in the network of old-fashioned streets which existed at the beginning of the 20th century between Government Place and Dalhousie Square. Here were the residences of the Private Secretary and Military Secretary, constructed by the second Lord Elgin (1894-1899) (in days of old both these officials had been quartered in the wings of Government House); the Viceroy's stables and coach-houses; the quarters of the steward, chef and native servants; the stables and quarters of the Body Guard; the Private Secretary's Office and Press; the dispensary and the kitchen. All the food that was eaten in Government House had to be carried nearly two hundred yards in *dhoolies* or boxes carried on poles on the shoulders of men. The Viceroy's Band had to be accommodated half a mile away, in the Fort in constant danger of

eviction by the Military authorities who wanted the quarters, while the space in the stable-yard of those days was so limited that every time the big carriages were used they had to be dragged out by coolies into the compound of Government House and the horses harnessed to them in front of the main entrance. These and other anomalies led Lord Curzon in 1905 to take steps to acquire a large area outside the compound to the North of Government House, as a result of which there now confront the house on that side a range of buildings which house all of the staff who do not actually live in the house. Some explanation is required, as to why the Private Secretary's house is not built in the same style as the rest of the Government House premises in Wellesley Place. The Private Secretary's house was built in 1895 and when, in 1907-1908 the rebuilding of Wellesley Place was proceeding according to Lord Curzon's plan the Viceroy's Military Secretary moved into the Private Secretary's house while his own was being rebuilt. Possibly the Private Secretary at that time was a bachelor or his wife was not in India and so he did not need the house and went to live in Government House. The delay, however, was fatal and probably the fact that Lord

Hardinge knew of the impending transfer of the Capital to Delhi caused the Government of India to decide to spend no more money on Viceregal staff quarters in Calcutta. The final building operations were the construction of new kitchens by Lord Minto (1905-1910) in the North-West corner of the compound between the railings and the screen of trees, displacing cow-sheds which used to be there.

No description of the exterior of Government House would be complete without some mention, however brief, of objects of interest immediately outside its gates.

Much of what is to-day pleasant and dignified in the immediate surroundings of Government House is due to Lord Curzon.

When he came he found that the growth of the city right up to the gates of Government House, accompanied by much of the squalor and a good deal of the careless irregularity of an oriental town, had resulted in a setting which was neither appropriate nor even orderly. He therefore drew a parallelogram bounded on the North by Dalhousie Square, on the South by the

Esplanade, on the East by Old Court House Street and on the West by Council House Street and within that area he provided for the proper paving and lighting of the principal streets at the cost of Government.

As has already been narrated, he acquired the land immediately to the North of Government House and planned the handsome buildings in Wellesley Place in which the senior members of the staff and garages and stables, and various offices are now accommodated.

Lord Curzon's full plan was to turn Wellesley Place into an entirely official quarter with suitable and dignified architecture and thus to link Government House up intimately with the historic Dalhousie Square which has been so closely and continuously associated with British Rule in Bengal from its inception. 'For Dalhousie Square was the Tank Square and Park of the old Calcutta and was the centre and hub of the early British settlement. The first Fort William, which was begun in 1696 in the reign of William and Mary, formed part of the western boundary of the Square and within the Fort were the first Government House and the original Writers'

Buildings. St. Anne's Church (razed by Siraj-ud-Dowlah in 1756) stood about where the Holwell Monument stands now and the Old Court House which was demolished in 1792 stood on the site now occupied by St. Andrew's Church.

Although this plan did not come to fruition, Lord Curzon did a good deal for the improvement of Dalhousie Square. He laid out the ground afresh, squared the famous Lal Dighi, surrounded it with a pillared balustrade and a garden and swept away a mass of unsightly sheds and huts, converting it into an open-air resort for the public and what he calls a Valhalla for the Bengal Government. He also put up, largely at his own expense, the present Holwell Monument, an improved reproduction in marble of the original erected by Governor Holwell which had fallen into disrepair and had been demolished, and in addition demarcated by marble tablets and brass lines let into the pavement the boundaries of the old Fort and in particular the actual site of the Black Hole.

To the South-East of Government House there was a plot of open ground seamed by untidy paths and scattered with rubbish extending from the



Esplanade to the Ochterlony Monument and containing the Dharamtolla Tank. Lord Curzon filled up the tank and converted the entire area into a public garden which bears his name.

At the end of Chiowringhee and just to the North-East of the Curzon Gardens is a handsome mosque which is deserving of mention here, because it was built and endowed in 1842 by Prince Ghulam Muhammad, son of Tippu Sultan of whom there are relics both inside Government House and in the grounds.

The area to the South of Government House was never in any danger of encroachment. The principal reason why the old Fort William fell in 1756 was that the fire of its guns was masked by the surrounding buildings rendering it practically indefensible. With part of the compensation exacted after Clive and Admiral Watson had recaptured Calcutta early in 1757 and after Clive's victory at Plassey in June of the same year, a hamlet called Gobindapur was cleared of its inhabitants and the construction of the present Fort William started late in 1757.\* It was not finished till 1781 and is said to have cost £2,000,000, half a million of which was spent on

works to protect the West face from the erosion of the river Hooghly. A large space all round it on the land side was cleared of jungle and no permanent buildings were, or are, allowed to be built on it which could afford cover to an enemy and so render the disaster of 1756 possible again. This, and not poverty, is the reason why athletic clubs on the Maidan have to put up pavilions of lath and canvas instead of permanent structures.

There are three statues just outside Government House grounds. Lord Lawrence, Viceroy 1864-1869 (by T. Woolner, R.A.), faces the South gate, while on his right hand to the East is an equestrian statue of Lord Hardinge (1844-1848) by J. H. Foley, R.A., and on his left hand to the West is a statue, also equestrian, by J. H. Foley, R.A., and T. Brock, R.A., of Lord Canning (1856-1862).

To the South-West of Government House are the delightful Eden Gardens named after the Misses Eden (sisters of Lord Auckland, 1835-1842) to whose liberality Calcutta owes them. The pagoda in them was taken from Prome and

is another of the spoils of the Third Burmese War of 1885-1886.

To the North of the Eden Gardens is the Bengal Legislative Council building, very handsome inside and cooled by a refrigerating plant, which was opened in 1931. To the North of this again is the western continuation of the Esplanade which gives frontage to three buildings. The one nearest to Government House is the old Government of India Secretariat. To the west of this is the Town Hall, very nearly contemporaneous with Government House having been built by public lottery in 1814 at a cost of Rs. 7,00,000, and west of this is the High Court built in somewhat florid Gothic in 1872 on the site of the old Supreme Court. The design is said to have been suggested by the Town Hall at Ypres, but it is a very poor imitation. At the West end of the Esplanade is the historic Chandpal Ghat where in olden days Governors General, including Lord Wellesley, first set foot in India.

Opposite the North-West corner of the Government House compound is St. John's Church built in 1787 chiefly by voluntary subscriptions to replace St. Anne's Church which was destroyed

by Siraj-ud-Dowlah in 1756. A good deal of the stone and marble used in its construction was brought from the ruins of Gaur in Malda District which was the flourishing capital of Bengal for four hundred years from 1170 A.D. to 1570 A.D.

St. John's was the Cathedral of Calcutta until the present Cathedral was opened in 1847 and in the North-West corner of the churchyard is a large octagonal mausoleum under which lies the body of Job Charnock, the founder of Calcutta, who died in 1692.

There are many other graves, tablets and memorials within the precincts which are of great historical interest including one to Admiral Watson who, with Clive, recaptured Calcutta in 1757 and died here not long after, and a picture by Zoffany of the Last Supper, all the faces in which are those of European residents in Calcutta in his time.

This completes the circle round Government House and with it the chapter. In the next will be told the story of how the house came to be built.

## CHAPTER IV

### The Building of Government House and its Builder

And further yet that noble edifice,  
The seat of Government and Wellesley's pride,  
Type of the brains that fill that noble head of his,  
And the high horse he loved so well to ride.  
'Twas built against the British powers allied  
When o'er the dams and banks of Leadenhall  
His grand magnificence poured forth its tide.  
Directors' tears cemented each fair wall,  
And joint stock sighs but firmer knit each rising hall.

*Tom Raw the Griffin, 1824.*

**G**OVERNMENT House owes its existence to Marquis Wellesley, Governor-General, 1798-1805. He assumed office on the 17th May, being then Baron Wellesley and Earl of Mornington and went into occupation of the Government House of those days, generally known as Buckingham House, which stood practically where the South-East wing of the present house stands. It was a house built round three sides of a quadrangle facing South on to the Esplanade and was rented from Nawab Dilwar Jung. Lord Wellesley

was dissatisfied not only with the state of disrepair in which he found the building but also with the unsuitability of the rooms which he considered to be too few in number and too small in size for their purpose. Within a month he had decided to build a more suitable residence and is credited with having declared that India should be ruled from a Palace and not from a Counting House; with the ideas of a Prince, not with those of a retail dealer in muslins and indigo. Without consulting or even informing the Court of Directors of what he was doing he proceeded at once to put his plan into execution and called on Captain Wyatt (an Engineer officer and nephew of a well-known English architect named James Wyatt) and Edward Tiretta, an Italian who was the East India Company's Civil Architect, to prepare plans for the building. Captain Wyatt's design was preferred and accordingly he is the architect responsible for Government House. The Chief Engineer, Major-General Cameron, was then instructed to furnish an estimate of the cost which he put at £66,150 which was accepted and the work was put in hand forthwith.

On 2nd October, 1798, Nawab Dilwar Jung signed a deed of release and assignment of the

rented Government House for £13,450 and other houses and land were purchased in order to make the compound, the total cost of which, together with the £13,450 paid for the old Government House, was £71,437.

There was no ceremonial laying of any foundation stone, the Governor General having left for Madras in connection with the Mysore Campaign (which resulted in the storming of Seringapatam at which Tippu Sultan was killed on 4th May, 1799), but the first brick was laid on 5th February, 1799, by one of the supervisors, a Mr. Timothy Hickey of the Engineer Department, otherwise unknown to fame.

The house was completed on the 18th January, 1803, although its construction had been sufficiently advanced to permit of official Parties and Levees being held in it from April 1802 onwards and Lord Wellesley took up his residence in it many months before the last artizan was out of the house.

The cost of the buildings was £87,790 and £18,560 was spent on furniture and plate so that with the £71,437 spent on acquiring the land on which it stood, the total cost was about

£178,000 in addition to which £3,433 was spent to make two new streets (Government Place North and Wellesley Place). Lord Curzon estimates that this total cost is only a third or a quarter of what it would have cost to build the house a hundred years later. That this estimate is not far wrong may be gauged from the fact that its valuation for Municipal rates to-day is in round figures Rs. 19 lakhs or £142,500 while the grounds are valued at Rs. 48 lakhs or £360,000, a total of £502,500, the subsidiary buildings being valued at Rs. 2¼ lakhs or £16,000. The result of the expenditure was, in his words, "to provide what is without doubt the finest Government House occupied by the representative of any Sovereign or Government in the world." But since he wrote those words Viceroy's House, New Delhi, has been built and Government House, Calcutta, must without question yield pride of place to that impressive Palace.

For several reasons some mention must be made here of the Council House which was one of the houses demolished to make room for Government House. First, because it was itself an old Government House; second, because it



gave its name to Council House Street; and third, because the present South-West wing containing the Governor's private apartments stands on part of its site.

The Council House was a large and handsome edifice built round three sides of a quadrangle and it belonged to the Company, having been built in 1765 in the general reconstruction after the troubles of 1756 and 1757. It was intended to house a large number of Government Offices as well as the Council Chamber, but for the first ten years of its existence it was appropriated by the Governor as his official residence until in 1775 Warren Hastings for the convenience of public business relinquished it and for the Governor General's occupation hired Buckingham House to its East which Lord Wellesley found so inconvenient.

Lord Curzon in his book erroneously describes the site of Buckingham House and the Council House as being in the South-East and South-West corners of the present compound but Baillie's map of 1792 reproduced in Volume I of Curzon's book makes it clear beyond doubt that both fronted on to the Esplanade Row which ran in a

straight line in continuation of Dhurumtollah Street to Chandpal Ghat. • The drive running past the South front of Government House used to be part of the Esplanade Row and is on exactly the same alignment. Since the old Esplanade was interrupted by the great South-East and South-West gates of Government House it has been divided into two—Esplanade East, facing the Ochterlony Monument and Esplanade West on to which face the Town Hall and the High Court.

So much for the actual building of the house. Now for some detailed description of its famous builder which has been purposely omitted from earlier chapters as it seemed appropriate that he should have a place to himself.

In view of the large mass of literature there is about Lord Wellesley it is as unnecessary as it is impossible to give here anything more than the briefest sketch so as to afford some impression of the kind of man who conceived and built Government House.

Lord Wellesley was only 37 when he assumed office and he held office for 7 years, there being only three Governors General who have exceeded

this—Warren Hastings, 13 years; Marquis Hastings 9 years; and Lord Dalhousie 8 years.

He was an intimate friend of Pitt and shared Pitt's distrust and dislike of the French.

His main idea was to smash the French power in the East and to beat them in the race to form an Empire in India. Napoleon was at the time in Egypt with his undefeated legions dreaming of the conquests of Alexander the Great and was in touch with Tippu Sultan in Mysore. Lord Wellesley achieved his object at a monetary cost which infuriated the Court of Directors in London, but he doubled the territories of the Company, transforming it from a mercantile body into a political power with a preponderating influence throughout India.

His method of achieving his object was to pursue the policy that the British must be the one paramount power in India and that native Princes could only retain the personal insignia of sovereignty by surrendering their political independence. When Princes refused to enter into satisfactory treaties he declared war on them. The history of India since his time has been but the gradual development of his policy which

received its finishing touch when Queen Victoria was proclaimed Empress on 1st January, 1877.

The first war he fought was against Tippu Sultan before he had held office, a twelve-month, and it was completely victorious. His share of the prize money of Seringapatam amounted to £100,000 but he refused to take it. For this victory he was made an Irish Marquis and the Court of Directors in 1801 voted him an annuity of £5,000 per annum for life. Tippu's seat in the Throne Room and the two guns flanking the Private Entrance are trophies of this campaign. In addition to the annuity, the Directors presented him with a Star made of some of Tippu's jewels : his picture in the Brown Drawing Room (reproduced as the frontispiece of this book) shows him wearing this.

The next war, some three years later, was the Third Mahratta War, 1802-1804, fought because some of the Mahratta Princes refused to be bound by a treaty signed by the Peshwa of Poona who was military head of the Mahratta Confederacy.

The campaigns which made up this war are perhaps the most glorious in the history of British arms in India, and the heroes of them were

General Arthur Wellesley, younger brother of Lord Wellesley, and afterwards Duke of Wellington, who laid the foundations here of his subsequent career, and General Lake afterwards Lord Lake.

This war ended in an enormous addition to British territory—the Madras Presidency practically as it exists to-day for one thing, Orissa and the territories North of the Jumna and west of Benares for another—and it finally broke up and finished French military power in India and left it in no doubt that Britain was the paramount power.

He also entered into peaceful treaties with other Princes in accordance with his policy.

This gives us the picture of a far-seeing and determined man of strong will, inflexible and even ruthless in carrying out his purpose and yet there was a great streak of vanity in his make-up.

When he started for India in November, 1797, he had already fully made up his mind to fill a role not only in the political but in the social sphere as well which would leave all his predecessors far behind and would set (as it did) an example which probably few of his successors

would be able or willing to follow. *The Morning Chronicle* wrote : "To such a degree is his frigate encumbered with stores, carriages and baggage that should the rencontre of an enemy make it necessary to prepare for action Lord Mornington will inevitably suffer from clearage in the course of six minutes a loss of at least £2,000."

To him pomp and parade were the indispensable mechanism of Oriental Government and he elevated the spectacular to the level of an exact science. His entertainments, ceremonies and processions, equally with his palaces, were a part of his conception of British rule in the East and no sooner was the new Government House open than it became the scene of a series of entertainments such as had never before been seen in Calcutta.

He was not only an aristocrat but an autocrat too, and he treated the members of his Council with almost undisguised contempt and also had the greatest contempt for the European society of Calcutta although he entertained it so lavishly.

He treated the Court of Directors with almost equal contempt and entirely disregarded their

injunctions to keep the peace, not to meddle with the Native States and to husband the depleted resources of the Company. It is typical of his dealings with them that only in March, 1802, when the new Government House was already about to be the scene of official entertainments and had been building for over three years did the Court hear for the first time of its existence! There had been constant complaints and rebukes from the Court to Wellesley about his administration to which he sent haughty replies or none at all, and this specific instance produced the explosion rendered inevitable as a result of the ever-growing tension over the whole field of policy—his wars, his treaties and alliances, his appointments and his sublime indifference to orders from Home.

The Court would gladly have dispensed with his services but he had the constant support of Pitt, the Prime Minister, and of Lord Castlereagh, President of the Board of Control. However, when they had obtained sufficient detailed information about the cost of Government House the Court drew up a prodigiously long despatch reviewing all the past delinquencies of

Lord Wellesley and conveying their censure. This despatch, while acknowledging his brilliant services, accused him of such a series of constitutional deviations, frequent disregard of all authority and continued assumption of new authority that the character of Indian Government had been changed into a pure and simple despotism. The Government House crime figured largely in the detailed complaints.

The Board of Control refused to approve the despatch but drafted another one, much less severe in tone which, while saying nothing about the building of Government House, rebuked Wellesley in dignified terms for despotic and unconstitutional methods of administration. Wellesley had, however, left India before this was sent off.

For some years after his return attempts were made in the House of Commons to censure him and even to impeach him but these were all negatived by large majorities and he subsequently filled, until he was an old man of 75, many honourable offices, viz., Ambassador Extraordinary to Spain, 1809; Foreign Secretary, 1809-1812; Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, 1821-1828, and



again 1833-1834; Lord Steward, 1832-1833; and Lord Chamberlain, 1835.

In 1827 he was even offered the Governor Generalship of India again by Canning in succession to the not very successful Lord Amherst, but Wellesley, who was then 67 and Viceroy of Ireland, refused it.

In his old age when he was somewhat impoverished, the Court of Directors voted him the sum of £20,000 which was a noble and handsome gesture on their part in view of the bad terms on which they and Wellesley had been when their ways parted.

The Wellesley family played a great part in establishing the British Empire in India and, indeed, it was very much a family affair, for apart from the guiding genius of Wellesley himself there was his younger brother, Arthur, who conducted the brilliant campaign in the Deccan during the Third Mahratta War while yet another younger brother, Henry, afterwards Lord Cowley and Ambassador at Vienna and Paris, was Wellesley's Private Secretary.

Wellesley died in 1842 at the age of 82 and is buried in the chapel at Eton. He is one of the few men who have been educated both at Eton and Harrow. His career at Harrow was, however, short and was brought to a close after an incident in which a new and unpopular head master was locked out, Wellesley taking a prominent part in the affair. He then went to Eton.

## CHAPTER V

### Barrackpor'e

Here from the cares of Government released  
Indian Governors their ease enjoy,  
In pleasures by the contrast much increased  
Their intermediate moments they employ.  
Wellesley first stamp't it his. He was the boy  
For making ducks and drakes with public cash,  
Planned a great house that time might not destroy ;  
Built the first floor, prepared bricks, beam and sash,  
And then retired, and left it in this dismal hash.

*Tom Raw the Griffin, 1824.*

**I**N telling the story of Government House it is necessary to take notice of Barrackpore also not only because both are the creation of Lord Wellesley and more or less contemporaneous but because Barrackpore is complementary to Government House in the same way that Viceregal Lodge, Simla, is complementary to Viceroy's House, New Delhi. The Governor General used to spend the whole of the year in Bengal, apart from tours, Barrackpore being his habitual summer residence. Lord Amherst was the first Governor General to go to Simla: he only went

for one year, 1829, while on the march in Northern India, and the practice did not become an annual custom till the time of Sir John Lawrence in 1864, although several Governors General in between spent some hot weathers there. Even after that date the Viceroys, as the Governor of Bengal still does, used Barrackpore House as a country house for week-ends.

The present house, however, is but a shadow of the house there would have been had Wellesley started this project earlier and been able to see it through before he left India.

As in the case of Government House, Calcutta, the whole business was carried through without the knowledge of the Court of Directors who, as soon as they heard of it, explicitly forbade any further expenditure on it. As Wellesley was no longer in India their orders were obeyed ! A portion of their despatch ran as follows:—"Our surprise and astonishment (i.e., at the building of Government House, Calcutta) have been much increased by the communications made to us (in the Bengal Public Letter of 4th July, 1805) by which we learn, notwithstanding the heavy

expense already incurred on account of the Government House at Calcutta, that a Building of considerable extent has been commenced at Barrackpore for the residence of the Governor General; this too at a time when our finances are in a state of the utmost embarrassment, and when we are called upon to make the greatest exertions to supply you with funds from Europe to assist in defraying the extraordinary expenses of the war. How to account for the inconsistency of such a proceeding we know not. To what purpose this building can be converted we are at a loss to conceive, having no plan or estimates to form an opinion on the subject; but we positively direct that no further expense be incurred upon it without our previous sanction, trusting that our present Governor General (i.e., Sir George Barlow) will be particularly mindful of our repeated injunctions with regard to Public Works and Buildings in future, and at the same time studiously endeavour to diminish the expense we have hitherto incurred on this account."

As a matter of fact the Directors need not have troubled to send these instructions for Lord Cornwallis who succeeded Wellesley in July

1805 and had very different ideas had at once ordered the building of Wellesley's new Palace to be stopped and the uncompleted building was finally pulled down and the materials disposed of—probably partly, in enlarging the present house—by Lord Hastings (1813-1823).

To turn to the circumstances which led up to the creation of Barrackpore House and Park.

A British cantonment had been founded at Barrackpore (whence the name) in 1775 and bungalows for Europeans soon sprang up round it. In 1785 Government bought 70 acres of land and two bungalows for the occupation of the Commander-in-Chief which were destined to form the nucleus of the present Park and House.

On 31st December, 1800, Wellesley wrote to Sir Alured Clark, the Commander-in-Chief, announcing that he intended to resume the Commander-in-Chief's Barrackpore residence for the use of the Governor General and that other suitable arrangements would be made for the Commander-in-Chief. In accordance with this decision the transfer was made on 1st February, 1801, the Commander-in-Chief being given a

house allowance of Rs. 500 per month in lieu, and Wellesley started to occupy the house almost at once. He was content with it for the next three years, though he immediately set about enlarging and improving the Park, and it was not till the beginning of 1804 when the new Government House in Calcutta had been open for a year and so ceased to pre-occupy his mind that he be-thought himself of building a new palace at Barrackpore. He therefore began to find the same sort of fault with his Barrackpore House as he had found with the Council House and Buckingham House in Calcutta and said that it was unsafe and must be pulled down and a fresh house built.

He accordingly had it demolished and started to build an enormous palace estimated to cost £50,000 (a comparison of this with the estimate of £66,000 for Government House, Calcutta, will give some idea of the kind of house Wellesley would have put up if he had stayed on) and even dallied with the idea of constructing a straight avenue to connect the two Government Houses! The expense of this, which would have had to be driven through a thickly populated part of

Calcutta was, however, too much even for his magnificent conceptions. His new palace had been completed as far as the ground storey when in July, 1805, he resigned and returned to England. Its site was about 200 yards South-East of Lady Canning's tomb and by proceeding along the road which runs from the House past the tomb till the gate is reached which opens on to the public portion of the Park mounds of earth can be seen immediately in front of the gate and across the public road which are the remains of excavations made in 1924 as a result of which the foundations were discovered as well as those of a Green House which Lord Hastings put up when he demolished Wellesley's uncompleted palace. This Green House is marked on old maps. To the West, or river-side of these remains is a masonry *chabutra* on which the band used to play.

While this new house was being built Wellesley constructed a temporary house, consisting of three large rooms opening on to a verandah, some 700 yards to the North-West which was the nucleus of the present house, the three rooms being what is now the central block of the building. Sir George Barlow who was Governor General from 1805-1807 converted each corner of the



south verandah into a small room thus greatly improving the comfort of the residence but it was left to Lord Hastings (1813-1823) to throw out the wings on either side and to add the North Portico and the upper Entrance Hall, now used as a billiard room, which converted the house into its present form, more than doubling its size and rendering it capable of accommodating a limited number of guests as well as the family of the Governor General.

The house itself is, as a matter of fact, badly adapted for a summer residence as its design is not suited for the purpose. What is needed is a series of rooms which will catch the South breeze at night and while this condition was fulfilled by the original three-roomed house, the building, as altered by Sir George Barlow and added to by Lord Hastings, leaves all the bedrooms with no through draft and the suites on the North completely cut off from the South wind as also is the dining room and the large sitting room to the West of the main drawing room.

To the house itself there have been practically no structural alterations since Lord Hastings enlarged it.

Lord Auckland (1835 - 1842) added the balcony on the Western side; Lord Lytton (1876-1880) the exterior staircase on the South front in place of an undignified iron staircase which was previously there, and Lord Ripon (1880-1884) the wooden porch in front of Lord Lytton's staircase while Lord Minto (1905-1910) installed electric light, laid the floor in the drawing room and redecorated the entire house.

The house has naturally never been the scene of much ceremonial as it has always been used as a place of relaxation, but there have been balls and entertainments in it and the large central drawing room was used for services before Barrackpore church at the North Edge of the grounds was consecrated in 1847 and Bishop Heber preached in this room on 27th December, 1823, while the famous Serampore missionaries, Carey, Marshman and Ward, used to come over the river as guests of the Governor General.

The most stormy episode it has witnessed was the mutiny of 1824 when the native regiments in the Cantonment refused to cross the water to go to the First Burmese War. Lord and Lady

Amherst were in residence with the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Edward Paget, almost alone, and would undoubtedly have been captured and held as hostages by the mutineers if they had fully realised how unprotected they were. British artillery was brought up from Dum-Dum and the fight which ensued with the mutineers raged not 400 yards from the house, some of the Amhersts' servants being wounded by stray bullets which entered the cook-house and also fell into the water under the windows. To add to the danger all the sentries in and about the house on the night the mutiny broke out belonged to the mutinous regiment.

Mutiny seems to have been Barrackpore's strong point for in 1852 at the time of the Second Burmese War it was only prevented by a hair's breadth, while Barrackpore was the first scene of the 1857 mutiny, the native regiment mutinying here in February and being disbanded before the main conflagration broke out at Meerut and Delhi in May.

A great deal more has been done by its successive occupants for the garden and grounds than has been done for the house.

The area of the whole Park is nearly 350 acres and the cost of acquiring it was £9,577. Lord Wellesley is responsible for this as he started acquiring the land and making the Park as soon as he entered into occupation of the Commander-in-Chief's house and long before he conceived the idea of a second palace there. The land when he acquired it was as flat as a billiard table and was covered with swamps and jungle. Wellesley's dream was to convert this into an English park and so he set convict labour to the task of draining and clearing the land and shaping it into hillocks and undulations, the earth for which was largely obtained by excavations in order to make pieces of ornamental water.

Desiring the distant view of a Church spire to complete the illusion of English scenery, he even gave Rs. 10,000 towards the building of the Danish Church at Serampore, though it was then the property of a foreign government and the shrine of a non-Anglican creed!

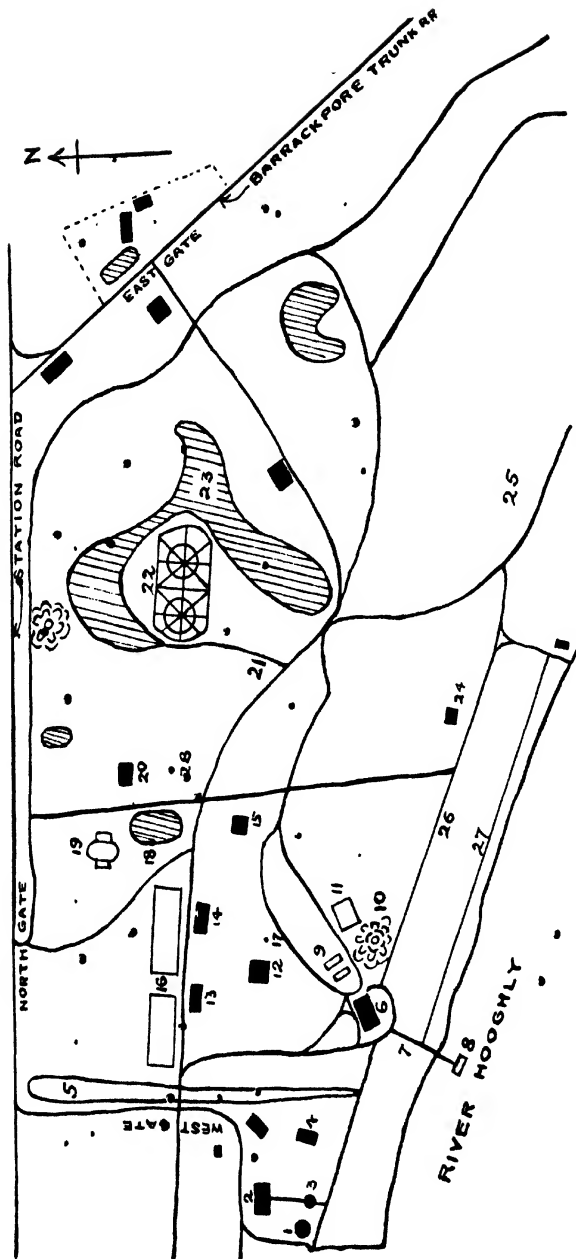
Before he left he had completed the construction of a stable (still in use) with stalls for 36 horses and standing for four carriages together

with a coachman's bungalow; the beautiful balustraded bridge over the Moti Jheel just to the North of the house; an aviary for large birds; a bungalow for the Band and a kitchen and servants' quarters which still exist. He also constructed the existing road from Calcutta as the first section of the Grand Trunk Road and had it planted on either side with trees, it being opened to the public the day before he handed over charge to Cornwallis. Along this road is a series of tall masonry towers, one of which is close to the Flagstaff to the North of the house. Lord Curzon states that they were semaphore stations for the Governor General's use and would have been continued to Bombay had the electric telegraph not been introduced. They may have been used for signalling but official records prove that they were built by Colonel Everest in 1830 for the great Trigonometrical Survey and formed the finishing base connecting Bengal with the rest of India and the starting point for Bengal.

Wellesley also established a menagerie in the North-East corner of the Park which continued to exist for 75 years until the Zoological Gardens at Calcutta were opened by Edward VII as Prince of Wales in 1876.

# PARK AT BARRACKPORE.

Scale 800' = 1



1. Semaphore Tower.
2. Flagstaff Bungalow.
3. Flagstaff.
4. Temple of Fame.
5. Moti Jheel.
6. Government House.
7. Bamboo Tunnel.
8. Landing Ghat.
9. Lady Lytton Borders.
10. Banyan Tree.
11. Tennis Court.
12. Kitchens.
13. Bungalow No. 1.
14. Bungalow No. 2.
15. Honey-moon Bungalow.
16. Lady Jackson Rose Garden.
17. Myall King's Grave.
18. Aviary Tank.
19. Fern House (Old Aviary).
20. Fern House.
21. Mahogany Avenue.
22. Curzon-Minto Rosery.
23. Serpentine Jheel.
24. Lady Canning's Tomb.
25. Site of Wellesley's proposed Government House.
26. Lord Ellenborough Road.
27. Site of Lord Elgin's Road and Bamboo Tunnel.
28. Minto Fountain.

A portion of the menagerie buildings still stands and is used as malis' quarters, but the menagerie still lives, in the way things do live in India, by names given to things connected with it. The Lily Tank is often known as the Aviary Tank, there being little doubt that the conservatory on its bank with its broken Gothic arches has been made out of what was once an aviary started by Lord Auckland (1835-1842) who used some sham ruins for the purpose. Another tank is still called the Deer Tank, memories of days when there were deer in the Park, days which Lord Lytton (1822-1857) tried to bring back by bringing half-a-dozen deer from Barisal and putting them in an enclosure near Lord Minto's Temple of Fame. Yet another is known as the Rhinoceros Tank while memories of Lord Wellesley's aviary are preserved by the *buttee* opposite the North-East corner of the Park known as Chiriakhana. The Governor General's elephants used to be kept at Barrackpore and to this day the place across the Grand Trunk Road to the North North-East of the Park is known as Hatikhana, although the last of the elephants was sold in Lord Elgin's time.

Lord Hastings (1813-1823), in addition to dismantling the beginnings of Wellesley's new palace and enlarging the present house, brought from Agra, where he found it lying in the artillery yard, the lovely lotus basin and fountain carved in relief on white marble which is in front of the South entrance of the house. It probably came originally from the Grand Moghul's palace in Agra Fort. The stone sundial close to the fountain was set up by Lord Elgin in 1895.

Lord Auckland (1835-1842) and his sisters, the Misses Eden, converted an old thatched bungalow in the flower garden into the plant and seed house which still exists and made a flower garden in front of it while Lord Ellenborough (1842-1844) laid out the broad terrace walk which runs from the lower landing stage just below Lady Canning's grave up to the house. Lady Canning (1856-1861) made the raised pathway leading from the South of the house to the upper landing stage. The girder bridge to link the landing stage was added by Lord Ronaldshay (1917-1922). Before this the ordinary landing place (called Nishan Ghat) had been higher up



near the Flagstaff. Lady Canning also put the pillared balustrade round the semi-circular terrace on the South of the house, planted blue Convolvulus (Morning Glory) so as to grow over it and opened out the big Banyan tree which was previously closed in by shrubs. Lady Canning's road to the new landing stage was converted into a leafy tunnel of bamboos by Lady Ripon in 1880. Since Lady Canning realised the possibilities of the Banyan tree it has been gratefully used by every occupant of the house as an open air room for meals and for sitting in. Its age has been computed by Rai Saheb A. C. Pal, F.R.H.S., the late Park Superintendent, to be 240 years. In 1925 he questioned an old man born in about 1830 whose father had told him that the tree was there before the East India Company acquired the land in 1785: it must therefore have been a large and noticeable tree at that time. Its height is 85 feet, it has nearly 400 aerial roots and it covers an area of 60,000 square feet (which would be considerably larger if it had not been prevented from spreading beyond its present limits). The parent trunk died before Lord Mayo's time (1869) probably as the result of

damage done by the great cyclone of 1864. Its rival in the Botanical Gardens at Sibpur is known to have grown from a seed deposited in the crown of a date palm in 1782. So that, though by artificial means the Barrackpore Banyan has not been allowed to attain the same circumference as the Sibpur one it is much older.

When Barrackpore is in use the Banyan tree serves as an outdoor pavilion in which the whole day is spent till evening, meals being served there, and it has sheltered the present King and Queen as well as many other members of the Royal Family and foreign royal families.

In 1888-1889, owing to the receding of the channel, a new landing stage had to be made some 600 yards downstream (near Lady Canning's tomb) and in 1894 Lord Elgin made a road running from it to the house parallel with and close to Lord Ellenborough's Road but on the river level which he shaded with a bamboo tunnel but Lord Minto (1905-1910) cut this down as he thought it obscured the view. The lower landing place has now disappeared and all that can be seen of the bamboo tunnel are two small pillars on the

right a few yards before coming to Lady Canning's tomb on one of which is a tablet saying "This avenue was planted by the Countess of Elgin in 1895." These pillars were at the corner of a platform under a bower on which were seats so that ladies could rest on their 600 yards walk to the house.

In 1904-1905, however, the channel swung back and Lady Canning's landing place could be brought into use again and has been used ever since.

An improvement Lord Curzon made was to drain and turf Moti Jheel, the long tank between the North front of the house and the Cantonment church, which had been a prolific breeding ground for mosquitos. The jheel was still further filled up by his successor Lord Minto.

There are various buildings in the Park, most of which are bungalows built to supplement the accommodation in the main house.

The original thatched bungalows were pulled down by Lord Elgin in 1863-1865 and in their place were built the present ones. Of these, the one to the North-West of the house near the Flagstaff is called Flagstaff Bungalow and is the Private Secretary's bungalow. The Flagstaff is the mast of H.M.S. "Kent", Flagship of

Admiral Watson which was so badly damaged in the bombardment of Chandernagore in 1757 that she had to be beached and broken up at Barrackpore. North-East of Government House are bungalows 1 and 2, intended for guests while almost due East is the Military Secretary's bungalow generally known as Honeymoon House owing to the frequency with which it has been lent for very many years to newly married couples. There are records showing that Macaulay's sister, Hannah, in 1835 spent her honeymoon in the predecessor of the present Honeymoon House and Lord Curzon tells of how one of his guests, then an official of the highest rank, wandered pensively away in the direction of this bungalow and on Lord Curzon's subsequently enquiring the reason he learned that his guest was revisiting for the first time the house which had played such an important part in his life thirty years before in the 1870's. To the West of the Military Secretary's bungalow is buried the famous race horse, "Myall King," belonging to Lord William Beresford which died on the Calcutta Race Course in November, 1893. It won, among many other races, the Viceroy's Cup in 1887, 1888 and 1890. Part of the inscription on the marble monument over the grave

reads:—"In memory of one who during a career of unprecedented success on the Indian turf proved himself a true king in courage, honesty and stoutness of heart and who out of a long series of equine friends stands highest in the affection of him who raised this stone, Will Beresford."

Walking from the house past the Military Secretary's bungalow a cross-drive is reached shaded by a magnificent avenue of mahogany trees which, from their age, were undoubtedly planted by Wellesley. On the other side of this drive is a fine roserie made by Lord Curzon and added to by his successor, Lord Minto. It consists of a large circular lawn surrounded by pergolas from which others radiate like spokes of a wheel. Lord Minto designed and had constructed a large stone basin and fountain 40 feet in diameter and holding 23,000 gallons of water intended for the centre of this roserie, but there were engineering difficulties about the site and so the fountain was placed in front of the Seed House and is often used as a bathing pool. Apart from the roserie many other formal gardens have been designed and laid out by various successive occupants of Barrackpore, some of which still exist.

An account of these is to be found in a booklet by Rai Saheb A. C. Pal, Park Superintendent from 1907-1931, called THE HISTORY OF BARRACK-PORE PARK, which was printed in the Private Secretary's Press in 1932.

Close to Flagstaff Bungalow is a building modelled after a Greek Temple which was erected by Lord Minto (1807-1813) in commemoration of 24 officers who fell in the conquest of Java and the Isle de France (Mauritius) in 1810 and 1811.

In 1844 Lord Ellenborough added a tablet in commemoration of the officers who fell at Maharajpur and Punniar in 1843 in the fighting in Gwalior due to disputed succession in the Scindhia family. As Sir Charles Napier's brilliant Sindh Campaign was fought in the same year it can only be concluded that Lord Ellenborough, who was a somewhat vain man, commemorated the comparatively insignificant actions of Maharajpur and Punniar because he himself was present when the former was fought. Lord Ellenborough, in commemoration of this campaign also erected the Gwalior Monument opposite the water gate of Fort William, made of Jaipur

marble and surmounted by a cupola made from the metal of guns taken from the enemy, in the centre of which is a sarcophagus on which are engraved the names of those who fell at the battles of Punniar and Maharajpur.

About 500 yards down the river bank from the house along Lord Ellenborough's walk is the grave of Lady Canning who died at Government House, Calcutta, on 18th November, 1861, of malaria contracted while stopping to sketch in the Terai on her way back from Darjeeling. The Viceroy decided to bury her at Barrackpore which she had loved so dearly and for the beautifying of which she had done so much and to enclose a sufficient space of ground for his successors. Fortunately none of them has had occasion to use it.

Her grave is beside the place where she used to sit and the ground was consecrated by Bishop Cotton.

The monument originally erected over the grave was designed by Lady Canning's sister, Lady Waterford, and consisted of a large marble platform ornamented with inlaid mosaic in the

Agra fashion with a headstone rising at one end. This was found to suffer so badly from the monsoon rains that in 1873 it was transferred by Lord Northbrook to the south transept of Calcutta Cathedral, where it stood till 1913, a simpler reproduction without the inlaid work being erected in its place over the grave. In 1913, the Cathedral authorities, finding that its great size blocked the south transept, obtained permission to remove the monument to the North portico of St. John's Church, the earlier Cathedral Church of Calcutta, where it stands to-day.

At the extreme South-East end of the Park adjacent to the Grand Trunk Road is the Eden School or Viceroy's Park School, a building of Gothic architecture founded by Lord Auckland at his own expense in 1836. This school which now calls itself the Barrackpore Government Park School always claimed to be under the special patronage of the Viceroy who once during his term of office entertained the boys in the grounds of the house and distributed the prizes. This custom has been transferred to the Governor of Bengal, who however is expected to make this an annual instead of a quinquennial function.



As regards the Park in general, originally there was little or no distinction between Park and Gardens, but as the public were increasingly admitted to the former and as the cultivation of the latter developed so they gradually acquired in some measure a separate existence although in parts there was no boundary line between the two, and roads to which the public were admitted ran through both. Lord Elgin complained in 1862 that there was only one private walk left to him, namely, that along the river bank to Lady Canning's grave, and that the whole of the Garden, as well as the Park, was open to the public. Subsequently the Viceregal ownership was more definitely re-asserted, but during the last half century the process has been one of progressive concessions to the convenience either of the Cantonment or of the public. Lord Lytton lent the Viceregal Band Barracks as a Library and Reading Room to the Barrackpore Club in 1878 and this loan was continued by each of his successors. At a later date the members of the Club were permitted to make and to keep up lawn tennis courts in the Viceregal grounds. In 1891, Lord Lansdowne gave leave to the Barrackpore

Golf Club to establish links and play in the Park, with certain reservations as to hours when the Viceroy was in residence and one of the bungalows in the Grounds was always lent to the Club members during the summer months.

Picnic parties were also freely admitted to the Park and leave was readily given to fish in the tanks. In the summer months when the Viceroy was at Simla both Gardens and Park were thrown open without restriction to the public.

There are so many trees spread over so great an area that it would be very difficult to give any account of them in a way which would enable them to be identified. There is said to be nothing else in India or indeed in Asia to compare with the Park and its broad stretches of undulating grass-land with bold clumps of trees and occasional pieces of ornamental water and much though his successors have owed to Wellesley for providing the magnificent Government House in Calcutta their debt for the peaceful English charm of Barrackpore is almost greater.

## CHAPTER VI

### The Occupants of Government House

**B**EFORE giving a list of the occupants of Government House since it was first erected it would be desirable to set out briefly the various changes there have been in the rulership of Bengal and India since the beginning of British power.

The oldest British Settlement in India is that of Fort St. George, Madras, the next, being Bombay. The first British factories in Bengal were established in 1633 and from that date to 1700 the Bengal establishment was subordinate to Madras except for a period of two years between 1682 and 1684 when William Hedges was appointed independent Governor of Bengal. Bengal was made a Presidency in 1699 and the period of permanent independent Governors of Bengal started in 1700, the first being Job Charnock's son-in-law, Sir Charles Eyre, and the title that was held till 1774 was President in the Bay and Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Fort William in Bengal for the United East India Company.

From 1699 therefore there were three Presidencies, Madras, Bombay and Bengal, each of which, governed by a President or Governor with a Council, was entirely independent of the others and subordinate only to the Directors in London. The trend of events happened to make Bengal, though the most junior in creation, the most important of the three politically, and by Lord North's Regulating Act of 1773 the Governor of Fort William was given control over the other two Presidencies, his supremacy being indicated by a change of title to Governor General of the Presidency of Fort William in Bengal. Warren Hastings who had already been Governor of Bengal for over two years became the first Governor General and held that office for a further eleven years. This state of things continued for 60 years till the Charter Act of 1833 was passed renewing the Company's charter for a further 20 years which altered the title from Governor General of Fort William in Bengal to Governor of the Presidency of Fort William in Bengal and Governor General of India, Lord William Bentinck (1828-1835) being Governor General at the time. Twenty years later in 1854 on the occasion of a further renewal of the Charter of the

East India Company by Parliament, when Lord Dalhousie was Governor of Bengal and Governor General of India, a Lieutenant-Governor was appointed for Bengal (Sir Frederick Halliday being the first) relieving the Governor General of his Provincial cares. Shortly after this, in 1858, when Lord Canning was Governor General, the Crown took over the administration of India and the Governor General became Viceroy also. From 1910 the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal was given a Council to assist him. The last change came in 1912 when the Imperial Capital was moved from Calcutta to Delhi and as some compensation to Bengal the Lieutenant-Governor with Council gave place to a Governor with a Council thus completing the circle and reverting to the position which had obtained 200 years previously.

We thus have the following periods of rule in Bengal:—a Governor with Council from 1700 to 1774; a Governor General with Council from 1774 to 1834; a Governor-cum-Governor General of India with Council from 1834 to 1854; a Lieutenant-Governor from 1854 to 1910; a Lieutenant-Governor with Council from 1910 to

1912; and once more ~~as~~ Governor with Council from 1912 up to the present day.

The holders of these various offices who have resided at Government Houses, Calcutta and Barrackpore, are as follows, the names in italics being those who acted only.

#### GOVERNORS GENERAL OF FORT WILLIAM (1774-1834).

Name.	Assumed charge of office.
Marquis Wellesley ..	.. 18th May 1798.
Marquis Cornwallis ..	.. 30th July 1805.
Sir George Barlow (I.C.S.)	.. 10th October 1805.
Earl of Minto ..	.. 31st July 1807.
Marquis of Hastings ..	.. 4th October 1813.
<i>John Adam</i> (I.C.S.) ..	.. 13th January 1823.
Earl Amherst ..	.. 1st August 1823.
<i>W. B. Bayley</i> (I.C.S.) ..	.. 13th March 1828.
Lord William Bentinck ..	.. 4th July 1828.

#### GOVERNORS OF THE PRESIDENCY OF FORT WILLIAM IN BENGAL AND GOVERNORS GENERAL OF INDIA (1834-1854).

Name.	Assumed charge of office.
Lord William Bentinck ..	.. 16th June 1834.
<i>Lord Metcalfe</i> (I.C.S.) ..	.. 20th March 1835.
Earl of Auckland ..	.. 4th March 1836.
Earl of Ellenborough ..	.. 28th February 1842.
<i>W. B. Bird</i> (I.C.S.) ..	.. 15th June 1844.
Viscount Hardinge ..	.. 23rd July 1844.
Marquis of Dalhousie ..	.. 12th January 1848.

## GOVERNORS GENERAL OF INDIA (1854-1858).

Name.	Assumed charge of office.
Marquis of Dalhousie ..	.. 1st May 1854.
Earl Canning ..	.. 29th February 1856.

## VICEROYS AND GOVERNORS GENERAL OF INDIA (1858-1912).

Name.	Assumed charge of office.
Earl Canning ..	.. 1st November 1858.
Earl of Elgin ..	.. 12th March 1862.
<i>Lord Napier of Magdala</i> ..	.. 21st November 1863.
<i>Sir W. Denison</i> ..	.. 2nd December 1863.
Lord Lawrence (I.C.S.) ..	.. 12th January 1864.
Earl of Mayo ..	.. 12th January 1869.
<i>Sir John Strachey (I.C.S.)</i> ..	.. 9th February 1872.
<i>Lord Napier of Merchistoun</i> ..	.. 23rd February 1872.
Earl of Northbrook ..	.. 3rd May 1872.
Earl of Lytton ..	.. 12th April 1876.
Marquis of Ripon ..	.. 8th June 1880.
Marquis of Dufferin ..	.. 13th December 1884.
Marquis of Lansdowne ..	.. 10th December 1888.
Earl of Elgin ..	.. 27th January 1894.
Marquis Curzon of Kedleston ..	.. 6th January 1899.
<i>Lord Anipthill</i> ..	.. 30th April 1904.
Marquis Curzon of Kedleston ..	.. 13th December 1904.
Earl of Minto ..	.. 18th November 1905.
Lord Hardinge of Penshurst ..	.. 23rd November 1910.

# GOVERNORS OF BENGAL.

Name.	Assumed charge of office.
Lord Carmichael of Skirling ..	1st April 1912.
Earl of Ronaldshay .. ..	26th March 1917.
Earl of Lytton .....	28th March 1922.
<i>Sir John Kerr</i> (I.C.S.) (Lord Lytton appointed to act as Viceroy.) .. ..	10th April 1925.
Earl of Lytton .. ..	6th August 1925.
<i>Sir Hugh Stephenson</i> (I.C.S.). (Lord Lytton granted leave.)	10th June 1926.
Earl of Lytton .. ..	9th October 1926.
Sir Stanley Jackson .. ..	28th March 1927.
<i>Sir Hugh Stephenson</i> (I.C.S.). (Sir S. Jackson granted leave.) ..	5th June 1930.
Sir Stanley Jackson .. ..	21st September 1930.
Sir John Anderson .. ..	29th March 1932.
<i>Sir John Woodhead</i> (I.C.S.). (Sir J. Anderson granted leave.) ..	10th August 1934.
Sir John Anderson .. ..	2nd December 1934.



## CHAPTER VII

### Belvedere and Darjeeling

**T**HERE are two other houses whose history is bound up with that of Government House, Calcutta, namely, Belvedere (called Viceroy's House since 1934) and Government House, Darjeeling: Belvedere because it is a Government House of the old days and because it was used for the official residence of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal from 1854 to 1912 and is now used by the Viceroy in place of the present Government House, and also because it is the oldest official residence of the Governor General of India in existence; and Government House, Darjeeling, because it has been the hill residence of the ruler of Bengal for the last 55 years.

Although Belvedere was not purchased as the official residence of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal till 1854, it had been the private country house of Governors before the time of Warren Hastings, being in those days to the Governor's

official residence in Calcutta what Barrackpore was and still is to Government House, Calcutta, for Governors Verelst (1767-1769) and Cartier (1769-1772) had occupied it as a Garden House. In March 1774 the Directors allotted one of the Company's country houses for the use of the Governor General. Warren Hastings replied saying that as all the country houses had been sold the year before he had taken it upon himself to purchase (for £7,500) the house occupied by his predecessors, Mr. Verelst and Mr. Cartier, called Belvedere but that as he did not wish to bring the Company under any engagements respecting it till their orders had been received he proposed in the meantime that the Board should allow him a yearly rent for the house equal to 10 per cent. of the purchase money. The Directors agreed to his proposal for renting the house and apparently said nothing about purchasing it from him, but all the same Belvedere then became for the first time an official residence of the Governor General. In 1777, however, Warren Hastings built a house of his own, close to Belvedere and to the South of it, which stands to this day and is called Hastings House and thereafter had no use

for Belvedere which early in 1778 he leased to Major Tolly, the excavator in 1780 of Tolly's Nul-  
lah, the lease being converted into a sale in 1780.  
It was during Tolly's occupation that Hastings  
and Francis had their duel close by in 1780 and  
the wounded Francis was carried into Belvedere.  
From then until 1854 the house passed through  
several hands until it became the official residence  
of the Lieutenant-Governor, and, later still, once  
more an official residence of the Governor Gene-  
ral. The shape of the house to-day corresponds  
with the shape given in the map of Calcutta and  
its environs made in 1794 by A. Upjohn from the  
survey taken in 1792-1793. Among its occupants  
was General the Honourable Sir Edward Paget,  
Commander-in-Chief in India from 1822-1825 in  
the time of Marquis Hastings and Earl Amherst  
whose pictures hang in the Breakfast Room  
at Government House, and shortly afterwards it  
came into the occupation of the Prinsep family  
who finally bought it outright in 1841 and sold it  
to the East India Company in 1854. Charles  
Robert Prinsep, who carried out the transaction,  
was Advocate General, Bengal, 1846-1849 and  
1852-1855. The price mentioned in a minute by

Lord Dalhousie was Rs. 80,000 and he estimated a further Rs. 20,000 for repairs and adaptations, a total of Rs. 1 lakh or £6,700. This, it will be noticed, was rather less than the price paid for it by Warren Hastings 80 years earlier.

Since then the house has been improved from time to time by successive occupants. Its architecture is of a pre-Italian renaissance style developed on an ordinary Anglo-Indian building. The construction of a verandah on the East side and the reconstruction of a more commodious West wing were carried out by Sir William Grey in 1868-1870 and Sir Ashley Eden (1877-1879) added the whole of the centre main facade with the steps on the North side.

Sir Frederick Halliday, the first Lieutenant-Governor to occupy the house, is interesting not only because he held office all through the Mutiny, but also because he came out to Bengal in 1825 when Earl Amherst was Governor General, when Belyedere was the residence of the Commander-in-Chief and when Lord Wellesley had left India but 20 years. He must therefore have been familiar with Government House when it was a comparatively new structure and must have met people

who remembered Belvedere when Warren Hastings lived in it and before that when it was occupied by the old Governors of Bengal. He therefore serves as a link in the history of the house.

Government House, Darjeeling, was provided as an official residence for the Lieutenant-Governor in the time of Sir Ashley Eden (1877-1879). The portion of Birch Hill on which it stands used to be called The Shrubbery and there was a small house on the site of the present one which Sir Ashley's predecessors used to occupy sometimes when they went to Darjeeling. It was purchased from the Cooch Behar State in 1877 and additions and alterations were carried out by the Public Works Department to adapt it for the Lieutenant-Governor's residence, only small portions of the original building being retained. The grounds were laid out in 1878 and the reconstruction of the house was finished by the end of 1879, it being first occupied in the summer of 1880.<sup>6</sup> In order to provide suitable accommodation for State and public functions, the Durbar Hall was built to the North of the house by Sir Charles Elliott (1890-1893) linked up to the house by a covered passage. This is the only part of

the old building still in existence, the main house having been so damaged by the earthquake of January 1934 that it had to be entirely demolished, a new Government House in ferro-concrete being built in its place in the time of Sir John Anderson which is expected to be ready for occupation by the summer of 1936.

Round about the time when the Lieutenant-Governor was succeeded by a Governor, various other buildings were erected in the grounds—the Guest House in 1911 and the Cottage in 1913. Richmond Hill and Rivers Hill where the Private and Military Secretaries live were purchased in 1914 having been in existence as private houses for a good many years previously. A terrace garden was designed and made by Lord and Lady Lytton in 1926 just to the North of the Guest House, while to the South of the Guest House and between it and the A.D.C.'s quarters is a sunk water-garden made by the Hon'ble Lady Jackson in 1928.

None of the other features of the extensive and pleasant grounds of Government House, Darjeeling, call for special mention and so the

Story of Government House closes. A glance through the index which follows, in which will be found the names of Kings, Queens and Princes; Divines, famous Statesmen and Soldiers; Wars, Treaties and Proclamations; in fact everything that goes to the making of history, will show what an important and central position Government House held in the life of British India during the whole of the memorable 19th century. If a full account had been given in these pages of all its occupants and all the illustrious personages who have entered it on business or pleasure it is no exaggeration to say that scarcely a name of any eminence whatsoever in the life of India from 1803 to 1912 would have been missing. The scope of the book has, however, been restricted so as to make it more or less a mere guide book in which are mentioned in detail only those whose portraits still hang on the walls or who have taken a hand in adding to the fabric of the house and who died sufficiently long ago to have passed into history. For this reason no biographical details have been given of Lord Curzon but this much may be said about him. He and Lord Cornwallis (1786-1793 and July to October 1805) are the only Governors General who have been

appointed for a second term, Lord Curzon's second appointment being all the more remarkable in that it followed immediately after the termination of the first with an interval of seven months' leave. As Government House is Wellesley's gift to Calcutta so the Victoria Memorial may be said to be Curzon's and indeed there was a great similarity in many ways between these two outstanding men. Had they changed places it is probable that we should still have had just such a Government House and just such a Victoria Memorial as we have to-day, and that the course of the history of British India would not have been much different. The last words in this book shall be words written by Lord Curzon:

“Since Government House was built by Lord Wellesley at the beginning of the 19th century until its final abandonment as the residence of the Viceroy in 1912, it was occupied by twenty-four Governors-General of India, or an average of a little more than four years each. Some of them were among the foremost men of their time. Within its walls grave decisions were taken, momentous scenes enacted, important movements born. When the house was built, the British



Empire in India was like a little patchwork of crimson spots on the map of the Indian continent. When it was abandoned, that colour had overspread and suffused the whole.

“Where the two Hastings and Wellesley and Hardinge and Dalhousie had conquered and annexed, their later successors organised and made firm. But from the same Government House, and from the same desk in that house, all these men issued the orders that first created and then consolidated an Empire. As I sat at the table I could picture to myself the wide brow and aristocratic lineaments of Wellesley, the austere dignity, the frail but overpowering energy, the laborious application of Dalhousie, the patient and pathetic serenity of Canning, the imposing presence of Mayo, the courtly charm of Dufferin. Even when the lustres lit up the great Ball Room on the night of some splendid entertainment, I could see Lord and Lady Hastings advance with an excess of old-world ceremonial, or the form of John Lawrence, uncouth and careless, stride up the floor.

“During the seven winters that I spent at Government House I came to know a good deal

about those who had preceded me, partly because, the Government of India being a Government that does its work for the most part on paper, I was able, when I chose, and was often obliged, whether I chose or not, to read their printed views in Minutes or Despatches; partly because, of my own accord, I made a special study of their published Lives or Journals, as well of the memoirs and narratives of the time; so that in the end they ceased in my imagination to be a mere procession of figures marching 'after the high Roman fashion' across the stage, and became instead a company of fellow-workers and counsellors, who had done the same thing that I was trying to do, and who, from the stores of their experience or wisdom, offered to me invaluable advice or warning."

THE END



## APPENDIX

In the course of examining old papers in connection with the writing of this book, it was found that owing to the exertions of Lord Curzon the Governor General in Council decided in 1912 that the original picture of Wellesley by Home, a Morgan copy of which is in the Brown Drawing Room, and a picture of Cornwallis by Devis should remain for ever in Government House, Calcutta. Through oversight they were allowed to be removed to the Viceroy's House, but when the facts were brought to the notice of Their Excellencies Lord and Lady Willingdon they at once agreed to the return of the pictures. Their Excellencies' assent came as this book was going to Press and so, without this Appendix, the book would be out of date almost as soon as it was published.

Wellesley's picture will be hung in the Brown Drawing Room, a new home being found for the Morgan copy either in the Viceroy's House or in the Victoria Memorial Collection.

The picture of Cornwallis was painted by A. W. Devis in 1793 at a cost of Rs. 20,000 or £2,166, the money for which was raised by public subscription in Calcutta, the subscribers asking that the picture might be hung in Government House. It is a full length picture and shows him dressed in a scarlet military coat with epaulettes, a white cloth waistcoat and knee-breeches with buckled shoes. He is wearing the Ribbon of the Garter. In the background is a view of Seringapatam which he besieged and reduced in 1792. This picture will be hung in the Brown Drawing Room in place of the picture of the Duke of Wellington which will be hung in the Blue Drawing Room.

Lord Cornwallis was Governor General from 1786-1793 and again from July to October, 1805, when he took over from Wellesley. He and Curzon are the only Governors General to have served for a second term of office. He came out in 1786 with instructions from the Directors to pursue a policy of all-round economy. He abandoned public breakfasts, dispensed with the country house of his predecessors at Alipore and was content with the Commander-in-Chief's

bungalow at Barrackpore (he was Commander-in-Chief as well as Governor General). He wrote soon after his arrival: "My life is not a very agreeable one, but I have ventured to leave off a good deal of the buckram, which rather improves it" and in 1789 when writing to his son, Lord Brome, then a boy at Eton, he said: "My life at Calcutta is perfect clockwork; I get on horseback just as the dawn of day begins to appear, ride on the same road and the same distance, pass the whole forenoon after my return from riding in doing business, and almost exactly the same portion of time every day at table, drive out in a phaeton a little before sunset, then write, or read over letters or papers of business for two hours, sit down at nine with two or three officers of my family to some fruit or a biscuit, and go to bed soon after the clock strikes ten. I don't think the greatest *sap* at Eton could lead a duller life than this." Cornwallis, though he discouraged extravagance, entertained very hospitably himself but by precept and example did much to stop the excessive drinking and gambling which in those days were customary among Englishmen in Calcutta. William Hickey was in Calcutta

during Cornwallis's time and in his famous Memoirs mentions Cornwallis's great hospitality of which he occasionally partook.

Cornwallis was a professional soldier and a politician, having entered the House of Commons at the early age of 22 when he was Lord Brome. At the age of 23 he got command of his regiment, the 85th, and saw active service in the fighting in the Low Countries. He entered the House of Lords in 1762 at the age of 24 on the death of his father and held various offices under the Crown which, however, did not prevent his advancement in the Army under the system of promotion which prevailed in those days for, in 1775, at the age of 37, he became a Major General. In the American War of Independence of 1776-1781 he commanded a division with conspicuous success.

Cornwallis was a man with a sterling character, a great fund of common sense and a superb and untiring devotion to duty who left a considerable mark upon Indian administration. He filled post after post in the internal and external service of Britain and even when he failed nobody ever blamed him. He was the first

Governor General to be sent out from England—his predecessors having been promoted servants of the Company—and his rank and station gave him great prestige which was enhanced by the fact that he had insisted, as a condition of acceptance of office, on being given power to override his Council the lack of which had been such a stumbling block to Warren Hastings. His administration was remarkable for his internal reforms in which he set his face against the jobbery and corruption that still persisted in spite of the labours of Clive and Warren Hastings to eradicate them. He provided for adequate salaries to all civil servants in return for the prohibition of private trade; reformed the Civil and Criminal Courts and tackled the notorious inefficiency of the military forces. The Permanent Settlement Regulation I of 1793, which has had such a vast effect on the political, economic and social history of Bengal, was issued by him, and he insisted on it being a permanent and not a decennial settlement on account of his fear of the corruption that was rife in those days, one form of which was the taking of bribes from zemindars in return for letting them off lightly in the matter of assessment of revenue.



In 1790 there came the Third Mysore War against Tippu Sultan. Cornwallis himself went to Madras to direct operations at the end of the year and after a series of preliminary victories in 1791, Tippu's capital, Seringapatam, fell in February 1792. For this Cornwallis was made a Marquis. The brass gun on the South lawn of Government House was taken in this campaign but the inscription on the plinth 'French Gun at Seringapatam 1789' is puzzling. As the war did not break out till 1790, it seems probable that it is a mistake for 1792.

After his return to England he became a Cabinet Minister in 1795 and was Viceroy and Commander-in-Chief in Ireland from 1798-1801

When he came out for the second time in 1805 he carried his taste for simplicity even further than he had done before and must have been rather embarrassed to find himself installed in Wellesley's palace instead of the old Buckingham House in which he had dwelt previously. He dropped the title of His Excellency and also of Most Noble, usually attached to the holder of a Marquisate, and asked to be addressed as "Honourable" only. He reduced the Body

Guard and dismissed, the greater part of the servants, divesting the remainder of their turbans and badges. In a letter written to Warren Hastings by his old Military Secretary, William Palmer, Government House was described as a desert and it was related that Lord Cornwallis had been seen to come out of his room himself to hunt for a messenger.

It was in keeping with his high sense of duty that he should have consented to return to India for a second period of office in 1805 at the advanced age of 67, but unfortunately he died in less than three months while on his way up the Ganges to take charge of military operations. His death took place at Ghazipur in October, 1805, and there he lies buried while over his grave is a mausoleum preserved in good condition to this day by Government.



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